

|| Śrī Śrī Gaura-Gadādharau Vijayetām ||
(May Śrī Gaura and Śrī Gadādhara be victorious!)

Dina-Candrikā (दिन-चन्द्रिका)



Śrī Haridāsa Śāstri

Śrī Śrī Gaura-Gadādhara Vījayetām
(May Śrī Gaura and Śrī Gadādhara be victorious!)

Dina-Candrikā

originally compiled in Hindi by
a resident of Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhāma

Śrī Haridāsa Śāstrī

*nyāya-vaiśeṣika-śāstrī, nyāyācārya,
kāvya-vyākaraṇa-sāṅkhya-mīmāṃsā-vedānta-tarka-
tarka-nyāya-vaiṣṇava-darśana-tīrtha,
also honored as vidyāratna*

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Translators' Note

It is a matter of great pleasure for us to offer an English rendering of Dina-Candrikā, written in Hindi and Sanskrit by the well-known Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇava ācārya (saint, scholar and teacher) Śrī Haridās Śāstrī, addressed reverentially by his students, disciples and well-wishers as Mahārājī. He is also widely recognized for his devoted service to Go in accordance with the Vedic tradition.

In the course of translation, we have consulted him on various unclear issues, which finds its reflection in the explanatory footnotes. We have also sought his permission to incorporate passages about Tulasī, prasādam and prayers to gods into separate appendices, and to create subtitles for better orientation of the reader.

Besides, we have retained the term Go which denotes the species of cow and bull found in India, disposing of the English word cow that includes several other varieties. To give a better feel for the original, we have kept other common Hindi expressions, too.

Further, unlike the current usage in English translations, we have employed the term *god* for Sanskrit words *deva*, *devatā* or *śura* that pertain to personalities like Śiva, Sūrya or Durgā, while reserving the word *demigods* to beings that are half-godly and half-human, or are of inferior status, for example Śiva's *gaṇas*.

It should also be noted that some of the names of Durgā and other gods can be translated in various manners. We have usually covered their basic meaning. Apart from that, although words like "deity" or "practitioner" are referred to with masculine pronouns, their female counterparts are naturally included as well.

It is our sincere hope that you will derive a lot of benefit from reading this book. To help us improve it in future editions, please send us your feedback to our email IDs given on the inside back cover of the book.

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Sanskrit Pronunciation Guide

Vowels

| | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|-----|--------------------------------------|
| a | <u>son</u> , <u>luck</u> | e | <u>set</u> , <u>beg</u> (but longer) |
| ā | <u>far</u> , <u>car</u> | ai | <u>night</u> , <u>aisle</u> |
| i | <u>sit</u> , <u>dig</u> | o | <u>border</u> , <u>saw</u> |
| ī | <u>police</u> , <u>week</u> | au | <u>now</u> , <u>how</u> |
| u | <u>push</u> , <u>full</u> | m̐ | nasal <u>m</u> |
| ū | <u>rule</u> , <u>boom</u> | h | a final <u>h</u> -sound |
| r | <u>river</u> | -ah | (at the end) <u>aha</u> |
| ṛ | <u>rethink</u> | -ih | (at the end) <u>iha</u> |

Consonants

| | | | |
|----|---|----|---|
| k | <u>kilo</u> , <u>come</u> | d | <u>down</u> , <u>day</u> (tongue against teeth) |
| kh | <u>make</u> <u>hay</u> | dh | <u>good</u> <u>hood</u> (tongue against teeth) |
| g | <u>forget</u> , <u>go</u> | n | <u>nut</u> , <u>north</u> (tongue between teeth) |
| gh | <u>big</u> <u>heat</u> | p | <u>stop</u> , <u>typist</u> |
| ṅ | <u>sing</u> , <u>hang</u> | ph | <u>up</u> <u>hill</u> |
| c | <u>charity</u> , <u>much</u> | b | <u>book</u> , <u>boat</u> |
| ch | <u>staunch</u> <u>heart</u> | bh | <u>rub</u> <u>hard</u> |
| j | <u>jug</u> , <u>enjoy</u> | m | <u>map</u> , <u>famous</u> |
| jh | <u>judge</u> <u>Harry</u> | y | <u>yellow</u> , <u>year</u> |
| ñ | <u>canyon</u> , <u>new</u> | r | <u>red</u> , <u>right</u> |
| ṭ | <u>take</u> , <u>toe</u> | l | <u>love</u> , <u>look</u> |
| ṭh | <u>ligh</u> <u>t</u> <u>house</u> | v | <u>voice</u> , <u>very</u> |
| ḍ | <u>down</u> , <u>day</u> | ś | German word <u>sp</u> <u>reche</u> |
| ḍh | <u>god</u> <u>hood</u> | ṣ | <u>show</u> |
| ṇ | say r and then <u>na</u> | s | <u>service</u> , <u>soft</u> |
| ṭ | <u>take</u> , <u>toe</u> (tongue against teeth) | h | <u>help</u> , <u>hero</u> |
| ṭh | <u>ligh</u> <u>t</u> <u>house</u> (tongue against teeth) | | |

śrī hariḥ

Foreword

At present, the crooked nature of this age has rendered the word *dharma* fairly meaningless. As a result, people have become resentful of and indisposed towards the activities of *dharma* to a very large extent. Despite this, the word *dharma* is still alive, and in its fragmented form has actually become an easy way to earn a livelihood for many individuals. The extent of duplicity and meaninglessness in such practice of *dharma* is so great that by contact with it people become frustrated and bored, and in a mood of delusion seek an alternative shelter.

By chance, such persons may find some alternative but they become *mūkāsvādat*, or like a dumb man who cannot explain what he has experienced¹. In other words, even upon finding an alternative shelter, they are unable to satisfactorily interpret and explain what they are experiencing, as *dharma*. Owing to the embarrassment which results from this dumb-like situation, their life becomes troublesome. Still, *dharma* is such an attractive word that humans simply cannot live without it.

¹ Often, people seeking the shelter of *dharma* look for something that can satisfy them completely, but due to their own sense desires and lack of discrimination between truth and falsehood, they end up pursuing activities that are not really *dharma*. As Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhāgavad-Gītā* (2.62-63), a person drawn by a sense object develops a deep attachment to it, which leads to desire and anger. Anger brings about delusion, which destroys one's value systems, upon which one's intelligence is lost and one falls down. The pursuit of that which is not *dharma* as *dharma* leads to this situation of dejection and frustration.

In fact, the expression *dharma* is so connected to human life that "life" and "*dharma*" often appear together, and are used inseparably time and again. Some say that the purpose of our existence is only to practice *dharma*, while others say that life is meant for accumulating material possessions, its purpose is to satisfy all desires, and that these are fulfilled by pleasing one's senses.

Since very ancient times, learned persons have acquired, via contemplation, a philosophical understanding through which human beings can achieve greatness and do good to others. They have concluded that our life is neither meant for accumulating possessions, nor for satisfying our desires, nor for pleasing the senses. Rather, the purpose of human life is to learn about and realize the Absolute Truth, which is something that cannot be done in other forms of life.

The great *ṛṣis* address the greatest of all entities, the supreme *Īśvara*², as Satya (Truth). His instructions, meant for everyone's benefit, are factually *dharma*, and following His instructions in an unpretentious manner is righteousness (*dhārmikatā*). For this reason, mankind cannot keep itself away from its attachment to *dharma* which is characterized by ethical conduct beneficial to everybody.

Only by abiding by the *Īśvara*'s instructions is everyone benefitted, in every way. There are two approaches to do this. The first is to persuasively convince the mind to follow His instructions after considering possible gain and loss. But in this, the mind primarily seeks the results and does not really inquire about the *Īśvara*. Driven by the greed to attain such results, people observe exceedingly difficult and troublesome practices and consequently grow hard-hearted and completely unworthy of being called *dhārmika* or righteous.

² The word *Īśvara* denotes the Supreme Being, or God.

Here it is noted that the true observance of *dharma* involves always engaging oneself in bringing happiness and joy to all other living beings. Only by this kind of behavior is the *Īśvara* pleased with the performer.

The second approach is the path of love. In this path, the focus is not on the results. Due to a sense of natural belongingness to the *Īśvara*, one's heart is filled with joy in the happiness of others, who are very dear to Him. The mind of such a person joyfully follows all the instructions of the *Īśvara*, just as they are, without giving way to the feelings of delusion, despair or fatigue. Such a mind is truly righteous. Although these approaches seem alike in terms of their activities, they are different in essence, owing to differences in their underlying motivations.

Only by dint of *sat-sanga*³ does one gain thorough knowledge of the highest path. Descriptions of this path are given in *śāstra* in form of the *Īśvara*'s instructions. Only those who are knowledgeable in *śāstra*, have realized their meaning and are righteous, can instruct others. To learn scriptural descriptions from them and to follow them is indeed the best recourse for those who desire to attain the prime goal.

In order to liberate the mind from its self-willed state and bring it under proper control, thorough knowledge of the subject matter and engagement in firm practice are necessary. This book, *Dina-Candrikā*, will in particular help people discipline their minds.

Śrī Haridāsa Śāstrī

³ *Sat-sanga* denotes association with saintly people who live by the true principles of *dharma*.

1. Introduction

*mādhavomādhavāv īsau sarva-siddhi-vidhāyinau
vande parasparātmānau paraspara-nati-priyau*

I offer my obeisances to the two Īśvaras - Kṛṣṇa, the husband of Mā (Lakṣmī), and Śiva, the husband of Umā (Pārvatī), Who are the source of all ability and perfection. They are always united, and filled with mutual love and respect for each other.

*praṇamya sac-cid-ānandam īśvaram viśva-śāntidam
mānavānām pramodāya cinomi dina-candrikām*

After bowing to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who is eternal, full of knowledge and bliss, and bestows peace upon the entire universe, I am composing the Dina-Candrikā for the happiness and welfare of human beings.

It is beneficial to wake up before sunrise. Before leaving the bed, one should first beg forgiveness from Pṛthvī, the Earth, for the offence of placing one's feet upon her, while reciting *samudra-mekhlale devi parvata-stana-maṇḍale viṣṇu-patni namasyāmi pāda-sparṣam kṣamasva me*, which means:

O Goddess Earth, wife of Viṣṇu, who have oceans as your waist and mountains as your breasts, I offer my obeisance unto you. Please pardon me for placing my feet upon you.

Then one should offer obeisance to her again while reciting *priya-dattāyai bhuve namaḥ* which means, "O mother Earth! O Priya-dattā! I offer my respects to you," and then leaves the bed.

⁴ Pṛthvī, Earth, is known as Priyadattā, as she imparts *mamatva* or feelings of love, affection and attachment to the living beings.

It is best to get up two hours before sunrise; doing so after sunrise is forbidden as well as sinful. After rising, it is essential to perform one's ablutions: evacuate, clean the teeth and tongue, and bathe. All these are done singly, and in privacy. Unless one does these, one is considered ineligible to do other activities.

In all states of existence, whether one is sleeping or awake, it is necessary to constantly remember the names of the *Īśvara*, i.e. *Bhagavān* (the Supreme Person). There is only one *Īśvara*, and according to His qualities and activities, He is known by various names such as *Śiva*, *Pārvatī*, *Viṣṇu*, *Gaṇapati*, or *Sūrya*. Of these, one must constantly remember that name with which one is very familiar and which one likes very much.

Having a bath in the morning is beneficial to health, but if one is unable to do so, one should at least wear clean clothes. It is also mandatory to wear an *uttariya* (upper cloth), as it is forbidden to perform activities such as worshipping (*pūjā*) and eating food (*bhojana*) while wearing a single piece of cloth. After this, one must sit on a clean seat (*āsana*). A woollen blanket and a mat made from the sacred *kuśa* grass are both considered pure and a cloth needs to be placed on these before sitting. The *svastika-āsana* is an excellent posture since it is beneficial to sit with one's body straight; that is to say, with one's waist, spine, neck and head vertically aligned.

Thus seated on the *āsana*, one must purposefully perform *japa* (chanting) of the name of one's *iṣṭa-deva* (one's chosen or dear deity), with all attention on the syllables. While doing *japa*, one must not close one's eyes completely; they should be partially open. Completely closing the eyes can cause one to fall asleep; on the other hand, the mind will be disturbed on keeping them completely open. The mind should be fully absorbed in the holy names of one's dear deity, and it is necessary to carefully watch it to ensure that it does not wander elsewhere.

If one worships a picture or a photograph of one's deity, then it is recommended that one sees it while worshiping.

What makes one worshipable?

The quality of doing good to others and desiring their welfare makes one worshipable; the greater this quality in one, the more worshipable one becomes. Amongst all forms of life, the human birth is considered the best. Although eating, sleeping, seeking protection and creating progeny are all possible in the human birth, scriptural knowledge is needed to distinguish between right (what should be done) and wrong (what should not be done).

Indeed, scriptural knowledge can effectively be applied only in the human birth, since other living beings act according to their previous *saṁskāras*. Traits such as whimsicality and indiscipline (*ucchrāṅkalatā*), selfish attachment (*svārtha-parāyaṇatā*), enmity and hatred (*vidveṣa*) and making mistakes (*pramāda*) do not exist in them since these living beings follow the natural order established by the *Īśvara*.

Hence, it is only in the human form that knowledge of the scriptures is absolutely essential. Without it, human beings will not allow anybody to live happily, and will grow so undisciplined that mother Earth herself, becoming overburdened, will tremble. Indeed, even one impertinent human being can burden the Earth more than the mighty *Himālayas* or the ocean. To relieve her of such a burden, the *Īśvara* Himself appears as an *avatāra*, and saintly people too come to impart proper knowledge to such individuals.

It should also be pointed out that people get affiliated to factions and groups, and subsequently worship a person who is devoid of good qualities and activities, promoting his philosophy and lineage. This is essentially politics. *Dharma*, on the other hand,

stands for the truth and impartiality, and according to its principles, respect and honor are given to a person only after seeing in him qualities and activities that are genuinely beneficial to humanity. If such *dharma* is not followed, it becomes very difficult for men as well as animals to remain peaceful.

Once upon a time, after the creator had created the universe and established a system of administration along with leaders for running the same, the leaders became politically inclined, began to promote themselves by building groups of followers, and engaged the living entities for their own selfish motives. These corrupt leaders disrespected the natural order and used tact and wile to get the support of others.

During these disturbed times, great sages (*munis*) resolved to unite the differing factions. They initiated a transcendental election process, in which Śrī Hari⁵ was unanimously chosen as the leader and everyone else was defeated. Subsequently, the process of worshiping His form was introduced.

⁵ Refers to a name of the Supreme God.

2. Worship (Pūjā) of one's Iṣṭa

Real worship involves honoring an individual who possesses the quality of genuinely working for the welfare of others. In such worship, qualities like *ahimsā* (non-violence), *satya* (truth), *asteya* (refraining from stealing or usurping the property of others), *brahmacarya* (celibacy in body, mind and speech) and *aparigraha* (being non-possessive or detached from possessions) are its principal flowers. In fact, without these qualities all the offerings only serve to distress, rather than please, the deity.

That which has a name also has a form, and an identity. The creator of this universe is endowed with a definite identity, names and qualities. His form is recognized by these names, using which the authors of the scriptures have described Him. The *Īśvara* is all-pervading and being so, He is present under all circumstances in all His creation. Therefore, it is a common practice to worship Him in different forms such as His picture.

Before doing His *pūjā*, however, the disciple must necessarily worship his Gurudeva. He first offers his obeisance reciting:

*akhaṇḍa-maṇḍalākāraṁ vyāptam yena carācaram
tat-padam darsitam yena tasmai śrī-gurave namah*

I offer my respectful obeisances to my Guruji who has shown me the feet of the Supreme Being Who pervades the entire universe that consists of moving and non-moving entities.

Then, reciting the *guru-pūjā-mantra* etc *gandha-puṣpe śrī-gurave namaḥ* he offers flowers dipped in sandalwood paste to the lotus feet of his spiritual master. If the latter is physically present, the disciple washes his (Gurudeva's) feet and then wipes them with a cloth; while in his absence, he recites *etat pādyam śrī-gurave namaḥ* and offers water.

Worship with five articles (*pañcopacāra-pūjā*)

Viṣṇu cannot be worshiped without (1) perfume (or sandalwood paste), (2) flowers, (3) incense, (4) a lamp and (5) an offering of food along with Tulasī leaves. Similarly, it is necessary to utilize prescribed articles such as flowers and leaves in the worship of other *devatās*, too. If the prescribed articles are not physically available they should be offered mentally. Before doing *pūjā*, one prepares the *pañcapātra* and other related items, and also performs one's *sandhyā-kārya*⁶.

Ācamana, applying tilaka, another ācamana

Take a drop of water in the right palm and saying *om keśavāya namaḥ* touch it to the lips and then discharge on the floor. Repeat this action two more times, saying *om nārayanāya namaḥ* and *om mādhavāya namaḥ*. Then, saying *om govindāya namaḥ* and *om viṣṇave namaḥ*, wash your right and left palms respectively.

After that tie the tuft of hair (*śikhā*) on the head and apply *tilaka*⁷ in the prescribed manner to the twelve designated places on the body. All this is done by the worshiper for the pleasure of the deity he is worshipping. The places where *tilaka* is to be applied and the corresponding *mantras* to be chanted while applying it are these:

⁶ A daily practice that a boy engages in after his *upanayana* ceremony. It involves prayers to various gods and forefathers as well as chanting of the *gāyatrī* mantra, and is performed three times a day: at sunrise, noon and sunset.

⁷ Marks made on twelve parts of the body with a paste of colored earth, such as *gopī-candana*.

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 Forehead | <i>om keśavāya namaḥ</i> |
| 2 Belly (above the navel) | <i>om nārāyaṇāya namaḥ</i> |
| 3 Middle of the chest | <i>om mādhavāya namaḥ</i> |
| 4 Throat | <i>om govindāya namaḥ</i> |
| 5 Right side of the waist | <i>om viṣṇave namaḥ</i> |
| 6 Right upper arm | <i>om madhusūdanāya namaḥ</i> |
| 7 Right shoulder | <i>om trivikramāya namaḥ</i> |
| 8 Left side of the waist | <i>om vāmanāya namaḥ</i> |
| 9 Left upper arm | <i>om śrīdharāya namaḥ</i> |
| 10 Left shoulder | <i>om hṛṣikeśāya namaḥ</i> |
| 11 Upper back | <i>om padmanābhāya namaḥ</i> |
| 12 Lower back | <i>om dāmodarāya namaḥ</i> |

Then, saying *om vāsudevāya namaḥ*, sprinkle some drops of the water used to wash the *tilaka* off your hands, on to your head.

Nyāsa

One then performs *nyāsa* to ensure the accomplishment of all one's purposes. *Nyāsa* is done by touching the ring-finger with the thumb of the right hand, placing this on the *brahma-randhra* (topmost part of the head) and meditating on the *kirīṭa-mantra*:

*om śrī-kirīṭa-keyūra-hāra-makara-kuṇḍala-cakra-śaṅkha-
gadā-padma-hasta-pītāmbara-dhara-śrīvatsāṅkita-vakṣaḥ-
sthala-śrī-bhūmi-sahita-svātma-jyoti-dīpta-karāya
sahasrāditya-tejase namo namaḥ*

Unto that person (Śrī Viṣṇu), Who is adorned with a crown, a bracelet on the upper arm, a garland of pearls and earrings shaped like fish, Who holds a wheel, a conch, a mace and a lotus in His hands, Who is dressed in a garment of yellow color, Whose chest has the mark of a curl of hair (Śrīvatsa), Who is accompanied by Śrī Bhūmi (the goddess Earth), Who illuminates everything by His own effulgence, and Who is as brilliant as a thousand suns, I offer my respectful obeisances.

Preparing pañcapātra (pañcapātra-sthāpana)

With water, first one makes a triangle on the floor and does pūjā of each of the three corners of this triangle by reciting *om kurmāya namaḥ*, *om anantāya namaḥ* and *om ādhāra-śaktaye namaḥ* respectively, offering a drop of water each time. In the middle of the triangle, one worships the name of one's iṣṭa-deva by pronouncing it with the fourth-case ending, followed by *namaḥ*, such as "*śivāya namaḥ*" or "*kṛṣṇāya namaḥ*". The pañcapātra is then placed on top of this. Next, one mentally imagines touching the water with the *aṅkuṣa-mudrā*, without physically coming into contact with it, while reciting the following mantra:

*gaṅge ca yamune caiva godāvari sarasvati
narmade sindhu kāveri jale 'smin sannidhim kuru*

O Gaṅgā, O Yamunā, O Godāvarī, O Sarasvatī, O Narmadā,
O Sindhu, O Kāverī, please appear in this water.

Then, above the pañcapātra, one recites the *mūla-mantra*⁸ ten times.

Tarpaṇa

One next performs *tarpaṇa*, which signifies pleasing one's forefathers, gods, sages and teachers by offering them drops of water. This is achieved by saying the following mantras and offering a drop of water with each: *pitṛṇ tarpayāmi*, *devān tarpayāmi*, *ṛṣīn tarpayāmi* and *guru-paramparāṇ tarpayāmi*. Finally one recites *ābrahma-stamba-paryantāṇ jagat tṛpyatu* ("May all living beings from Brahmā to a small clump of grass be content"), visualizing with the mantra contentment of all living beings in this world.

⁸ The *mūla-mantra* (root mantra), is used throughout the worship. Normally it contains one of the *bija-mantras* (like *om*, *hrīm*, *klīm*...), followed by the name of one's deity in the fourth case followed by *namaḥ* (e.g. *klīm kṛṣṇāya namaḥ*). Its exact wording, however, must be consulted with one's Gurudeva.

Offering of japa (*japa-samarpana*)

After this, one performs *japa-samarpana* by reciting the *gāyatri*-*mantra* 10 or 108 times and likewise by meditating on the *guru*-*bīja*-*mantra* 10 or 108 times. The *mantra* for *japa-samarpana* is as follows:

*guhyātiguhya-goptā tvam grhāṇāsmat-kṛtaṁ japam
siddhir bhavatu me deva tvat-prasādāt tvayi sthite*

You are the protector of the greatest of great secrets. Please accept my *japa*. O Supreme Being! By Your kind mercy, may I achieve perfection (*siddhi*) being situated in You.

Perfection in doing *japa* is attained by contemplating on the meaning of the *mantra* being recited during *japa*. However, the ability to focus steadily on the meaning of the *mantra* depends on purity of one's heart and on engaging in devotional practices like *śravaṇa* or *kīrtana*. The meaning of Hare Kṛṣṇa is calling out to the Īśvara, and that is done with *bhāva* (mood of respect and affection). Similarly, *japa* of the dear names of one's *iṣṭa-devatā* (such as Hari, Kṛṣṇa, Rāma, Śiva, Durgā, Viṣṇu, Sūrya, or Gaṇeśa) is to be done with the heart filled with *bhāva*.

Qualification for japa

Only deep feelings of concern for the welfare of all living beings give one the qualification to perform *japa*. Also, to become free from *aparādha* (offences to the name), one should consider oneself lower than a blade of grass and stop hankering for honor and respect from others. Further, one must also respect others like one would the *Paramātmā* (the Īśvara Who resides in one's heart) Himself. In short, being a *nirabhimānī* (devoid of false identification) is absolutely essential for doing *japa* of the names of one's *iṣṭa-deva*.

It is important to understand that the *mūla-mantra* is about surrendering one's own self. *Japa* is thus done by contemplating on the essential nature of one's *iṣṭa-deva* while thinking "I surrender myself at Your feet".

Ārati

One should perform *ārati* to one's worshipable deity either after or before performing one's *sandhyā*. Ringing the bell, one wakes up the deity and offers Him *ācamana* (water to sip), *mukha-prakṣāḷana* (water for rinsing the mouth) and *mārjana-vastra* (a cloth to wipe the mouth). Then one does *ārati* sounding the bell, reciting the deity's names and offering step-by-step (1) *dhūpa* (incense), (2) *dīpa* (a lamp), (3) *jala-pūrṇa-śankha* (a conch filled with water), (4) *svaccha-vastra-khaṇḍa* (a clean piece of cloth), (5) *cāmara* (fan made of the tail of a yak) and (6) *vyajana* (a fan made of peacock feathers). Finally, one should offer one's obeisance to the deity, which is also an element of the *ārati* process.

How various articles are offered during *ārati*: With a clockwise rotational movement and using the right hand, *dhūpa* and *dīpa* should be sequentially offered four times to the feet of the deity, two times to the waist, three times to the lotus face and finally seven times to the entire form of the deity, from head to feet. *Cāmara* and *vyajana* are also to be offered in this manner, and this is the system for offering *puṣpāñjali* (handful of flowers) as well.

Finally one offers one's obeisances and puts the deity to rest. In the afternoon, the deity should be woken up with *ācamana* (water to sip) and *naivedya* (offering of food), according to one's capacity. Then it is essential to read (*śrī-grantha-pāṭha*) and listen (*śravaṇa*) to the scriptures.

The essence of *pūjā* is to respectfully offer one's *iṣṭa-deva* objects and articles that are dear to Him. After making a triangle on the floor with water, one places a *śaṅkha* (conch) on it, then puts in it flowers mixed with sandalwood paste and recites one's *mūla-mantra* ten times. Next, some water from it is poured on to the *tarpaṇa-pātra*. A few drops of this water should also be sprinkled on the other articles kept for *pūjā*. Once again, the *śaṅkha* is filled with water and flowers mixed with sandalwood paste. Next, the *mūla-mantra* is recited eight times; and the deity is bathed with this purified water after sounding the bell and reciting the following mantra:

*paramānanda-bodhābdhi-nimagna-nija-mūrtaye
svāṅgopāṅgam idaṁ snānaṁ kalpayāmy aham īśa te*

O dear *Īśvara*, Your consciousness is always drowned in the ocean of supreme bliss. Using my hands and other articles, I am going to bathe You, my Lord!

Purifying *āsana* (*āsana-śuddhi*)

This involves worshiping the *āsana*, or the seat on which one will be seated while doing *pūjā*. Reciting *ete gandha-puṣpe om ādhāra-śaktaye namaḥ*, one first offers flowers dipped in sandalwood paste to the *āsana*, and then, touching it, says the following mantra:

*āsana-mantrasya meruprṣṭha ṛṣiḥ sutalam chandah
kūrmo devatā āsanābhimantreṇa viniyogah*

Of this *āsana-mantra* (given below), the sage (*ṛṣi*) is *Meruprṣṭha*, the metre is *sutalam*, and the presiding deity is *Kūrma*. This *āsana-mantra* is used for the consecration of the *āsana*.

*prṭhvi tvayā dhṛtā lokā devi tvam viṣṇunā dhṛtā
tvañ ca dhāraya mām nityam pavitram āsanaṁ kuru*

O Mother Earth! O goddess! You support all the people of this world, and you yourself are supported by Śrī Viṣṇu. Please always give me your support and purify my seat.

Having thus consecrated the *āsana*, one takes a seat on it facing either the East or the North, with the deity either at the front or to one's left side.

If the *pūjā* is performed in a temple, then these steps should be followed: one mentally seeks permission from one's Gurudeva and, reciting *ete gandha-puṣpe dvāra-devatā-gaṇebhyo namaḥ*, worships the deities of the entrance doors with flowers mixed with sandalwood paste. After that one enters the temple taking care not to touch the door-frame with one's feet.

Purification of oneself (*bhūta-śuddhi*)

Afterwards, one performs *bhūta-śuddhi* by meditating on one's own *svarūpa* (essential nature). To perform *pūjā*, one must neither think of oneself as impure, weak, or lowly, nor give importance to one's body. *Bhūta-śuddhi* is done to ensure this.

Remembering the *ram bija-mantra* one visualizes oneself as immersed in a flow of water, and then as situated between walls of fire. Next, making the *kacchapikā-mudrā* with one's hands, one recites the *so'ham* mantra, and contemplating on its meaning mentally unites the *jīvātmā* (the self) situated in one's heart with the *Paramātmā* seated on a thousand-petaled lotus situated in one's forehead.

Then, considering oneself as pure and liberated, one imagines the five elements residing in the body as merging with the *ahan-kāra*, the five senses and intelligence as merging with the *rājas-ahan-kāra*, the presiding deities and the mind with the *sāttvika-ahan-kāra*, the *ahan-kāra* itself with the *mahat-tattva* and the *mahat-tattva* itself as absorbed by *prakṛti*.

Further, one imagines the *pāpa-puruṣa* (personification of sin), who resides in the right side of the stomach, as being dried up by *vāyu* (air) situated at the navel and burnt by the *agni* (fire) residing in the heart.

One then visualizes one's ash-covered body being purified by a nectar-like stream of alphabet letters emanating from a full moon situated in a thousand-petaled lotus. Subsequently, considering one's body as suitable for service, one chants the *omkāra* and meditates on one's *iṣṭa-deva*.

If possible, one should also do *prāṇāyāma* in the *recaka-pūraka-kumbhaka* sequence, and then meditate on the six characteristics of one's *iṣṭa-mantra*, which are *ṛṣi* (sage), *chanda* (meter), *devatā* (deity), *bīja* (seed), *śakti* (potency) and *adhiṣṭhātrī-devatā* (presiding deity).

To the left of the *iṣṭa-deva* is the place where spiritual masters reside; one must perform *guru-pūjā* here by reciting *ete gandha-puṣpe śrī-gurave namaḥ*. After that, one worships one's *iṣṭa-deva* by reciting *ete gandha-puṣpe* followed by a mantra, which contains His or Her name in the fourth case appended by *namaḥ* like *śivāya namaḥ* or *viṣṇave namaḥ*. For example, *ete gandha-puṣpe śrī śivāya namaḥ*.

The offering of *dhūpa* (incense), *dīpa* (lamp) and *naivedya* (food) is also done using these *mantras*. The *mantras* for offering take forms such as: *etad naivedyam śrī-śivāya namaḥ*, *idam pāṇīyam śrī-śivāya namaḥ*, and *idam ācamanīyam śrī-śivāya namaḥ*.

Worship of Tulasī (*tulasī-pūjā*)

After worshipping one's *iṣṭa-deva*, one should worship Tulasī with sandalwood paste and flowers, bow down to her four times and then circumambulate her. This verse summarizes the process of her worship:

*prāḡ dattvārghyaṃ tato 'bhyarccya gandha-puspākṣatādinā
stutvā bhāgavatīm tān ca prāṇamet prārthya dandavat*

One first offers *arghya* (drops of water) to Tulasī, then worships her with sandalwood paste, flowers and rice grains. After that one sings her praises, prays for her blessings, and offers *dandavat* obeisances to her (by prostrating like a rod in front of her).

Arghya is offered while reciting this verse:

*śriyaḥ śriye śriyāvāse nityaṃ śrīdhara-sat-krte
bhaktyā dattaṃ mayā devī arghyaṃ grhṇa namo'stu te*

O Goddess Tulasī, you are always honored by Śrī Śrīdhara (Kṛṣṇa), and your form is the embodiment of all opulences. My obeisance unto you. Please accept my *arghya*, offered with devotion.

Pūjā is offered while reciting this verse:

*nirmittā tvam purā devair arcitā tvam surāsuraiḥ
tulasi hara me pāpaṃ pūjāṃ grhṇa namo'stu te*

O Tulasī, in the ancient past, you were established by gods and worshiped by gods as well as demons. My obeisances unto you. Please destroy my sins and accept my *pūjā*.

Stuti (praise) is offered with this verse:

*mahā-prasāda-janani sarva-saubhāgya-varddhini
ādhi-vyādhī-harī nityaṃ tulasi tvāṃ namo'stu te*

O Tulasī, you are the mother of *mahā-prasādam*⁹, and you foster all good fortune and prosperity. At the same time, you always destroy pain, anxiety and disease from their roots. O mother, my obeisance unto you.

⁹ Food offered to Śrī Viṣṇu is always accompanied by a leaf of Tulasī.

Prārthanā (prayer) is offered with the following verse:

*śriyam dehi yaśo dehi kīrttim āyus tathā sukham
balam puṣṭhim tathā dharmam tulasī tvam prasīda me*

O Tulasī! May you be pleased with me and bestow me with wealth, fame, glory, long life, happiness, strength, health and dharma.

Pranāma-vākya (obeisances, as given in the Avantī-Khaṇḍa):

*yā dr̥stā nikhilāgha-saṅgha-śamanī spr̥ṣṭā vapuḥ-pāvanī
rogānām abhivanditā nirasani siktāntaka-trāsinī
pratyāsatti-vidhāyinī bhāgavataḥ kṛṣṇasya samropitā
nyastā tac-charaṇe vimukti-phaladā tasyai tulasyai namaḥ*

Just by her darśana, all sins are destroyed; by touching her, one's body is purified; by saluting her respectfully one's diseases are driven away, and by offering her water, fear of death is destroyed. By planting her in the ground, she grants immediate proximity with Śrī Kṛṣṇa (and a special relationship with Him), and by offering her at the feet of Kṛṣṇa, she awards liberation. I offer my respectful obeisances unto Tulasī.

It is necessary to clean the place where Tulasī stands and do her pūjā, which includes offering of a ghee lamp during the times of sandhyā.

One does then japa, according to one's potential, in a peaceful place and alone. It is inappropriate to chant on one's japamālā in a public place, or in front of others. In such circumstances, one must do japa only in the mind.

The glories of Tulasī and the benefits of performing service to her are presented in Appendix A, having been compiled from various scriptures.

Completing pūjā

After *arcanā* (pūjā), the following request is placed before one's *iṣṭa-deva*:

*mantra-hīnam kriyā-hīnam bhakti-hīnam janārdana
yat pūjitaṁ mayā deva paripūrṇaṁ tad astu me*

Although my pūjā has several shortcomings in terms of the *mantra* chanted, the process followed and the level of my devotion, kindly accept it as complete (and pardon these shortcomings).

*dhyeyaṁ sadā paribhava-ghnam abhīṣṭa-dohaṁ
tīrthāspadaṁ śiva-virīñci-nutaṁ śaranyam
bhṛtyārttihaṁ praṇata-pāla-bhavābdhi-potaṁ
vande mahā-puruṣa te caraṇāravindam*

O Mahāprabhu! Your lotus feet, which are worthy of my constant meditation, destroy lowliness and bestow elevation. They fulfill all desires, and are as exalted as a place of pilgrimage. They are praised by Śrī Brahmā and Śrī Śiva. Offering protection to one who takes shelter of them, they become the boat that helps him cross the ocean of material existence, destroying all his suffering. O Great Personality! I pay my respectful obeisances unto Your lotus feet.

*tyaktvā sudustyaja-surepsita-rājya-lakṣmīṁ
dharmiṣṭha ārya-vacasā yad agād aranyam
māyā-mṛgaṁ dayitepsitam anvadhāvat
vande mahā-puruṣa te caraṇāravindam*

O Mahāprabhu! You gave up the company of a beautiful wife, which is more difficult to give up than one's own breath, and which is desired even by the *devās*. Being the greatest among the upholders of *dharma*, you gracefully accepted the curse of a *brāhmaṇa*, which entailed that all of Your household pleasures be destroyed, and went to the

forest. Being endowed with the emotions of extreme compassion for the living entities caught up in the clutches of *māyā*, you ran after them in order to deliver them from the ocean of material existence and drown them in the ocean of pure love. O Great Personality! I submit my respectful obeisances at Your lotus feet¹⁰.

What follows after *arcanā* is *kīrtana*, or chanting and recitation of the names of one's *iṣṭa-devatā*. At the times of *sandhyā*, it is important to perform *ārati*, *kīrtana* and recite the glories of great saintly personalities.

¹⁰ This verse is considered to directly refer to Śrī Rāma Who, being an ardent follower of *dharma*, renounced His opulent kingdom which is very difficult to give up and is desired even by the *devās*, and went to the forest upon the words of His father Daśaratha. Śrī Rāma also chased an illusory deer, as desired by His beloved Sītā. However, in his commentary to the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam verse 11.5.34 Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Thākura describes how this verse also refers to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and it has been translated here following that commentary.

3. Bhajana-Niyama

The system for doing bhajana

The system of *bhajana* consists of several elements carried out throughout the day such as *kirtana* in a tranquil place early in the morning, *maṅgala-ārati*, *japa*, *sandhyā* rituals, *arcanā*, singing while food is being offered to one's *iṣṭa-deva*, *ārati*, resting one's *iṣṭa-deva*, honoring His *prasādam*, observing a vow of silence, taking rest, reflecting on scriptures and their meanings, performing *kirtana* during *sandhyā-ārati*, doing *japa* as prescribed, again singing when food is being offered, performing *ārati*, putting one's *iṣṭa-deva* to rest, and chanting His names. *Japa* should never be done in a loose manner; quite the contrary, all seriousness is required. Breaking this principle is considered a defect.

It is also forbidden to have one's food before worshiping one's *iṣṭa-devatā*. Irrespective of whether the food is made from leaves, flowers, fruits, water, grains, liquids or herbs, it is mandatory that it is taken only after offering it. One has to do *prāyaścitta* (atonement) in case unoffered food has been eaten.

Indeed, one must offer all one's items to his *iṣṭa* before using them. The parents of those who eat without offering food to the Paramātmā, Śrī Hari, reside eternally in hell. For example, new clothes, perfumes, ornaments, fruits, grains or liquids must be accepted only as *prāsadam* of Śrī Viṣṇu.

Some verses from the scriptures that stress this are presented in Appendix B.

There are various systems of pūjā that differ on the number of items offered:

The set of 5 offerings (pañcopacārāḥ)

gandham puṣpam tathā dhūpam dipam naivedyam eva ca akhaṇḍam phalam āsādy kaivalyaṁ labhate dhruvam

The offering of five items – 1. *gandha*, sandalwood paste, 2. *puṣpa*, flowers, 3. *dhūpa*, incense, 4. *dīpa*, lamp, and 5. *naivedya*, food offering – is known as *pañcopacāra*. On obtaining the complete fruit of *pañcopacāra*, one undoubtedly becomes eligible for liberation from this world.

The set of 10 offerings (daśopacārāḥ)

pādyam arghyam tathācāmaṁ madhuparkācamanaṁ tathā gandhādayo naivedyāntā upacārā daśa-kramāt

The following set of ten offerings is known as *daśopacāra*:

1. *pādyā*, water to wash the lotus feet of one's iṣṭa-deva,
2. *arghya*, water offered as a token of respect, 3. *ācamanīya*, water to sip, 4. *madhuparka*, an offering made with honey and fruit such as *bananā*, 5. *ācamanīya*, 6. *gandha*, sandalwood paste, 7. *puṣpa*, flowers, 8. *dhūpa*, incense, 9. *dīpa*, lamp and 10. *naivedya*, food offering.

The set of 16 offerings (ṣoḍaśopacārāḥ)

pādyam arghyam tathācāmaṁ snānaṁ vasana-bhūṣaṇe gandha-puṣpa-dhūpa-dīpa-naivedyācamanaṁ tataḥ tāmṇulam arcanā-stotraṁ tarpaṇaś ca namas-kriyā prayojayec ca pūjāyām upacārāṁs tu ṣoḍaśaḥ

The following set of sixteen offerings is known as *ṣoḍaśopacāra*: 1. *pādyā*, water to wash the lotus feet of one's iṣṭa, 2. *arghya*, water offered as a token of respect, 3. *ācamanīya*, water to sip, 4. *snānīya*, bath, 5. *vasana*, clothes, 6. *bhūṣaṇa*, ornaments, 7. *gandha*, sandalwood paste, 8. *puṣpa*, flowers,

9. *dhūpa*, incense, 10. *dīpa*, lamp, 11. *naivedya*, food offering, 12. *ācamanīya*, water to sip, 13. *tāmbūla*, areca-nut with leaf, 14. *stava-pāṭha*, recitation of the Lord's glories, 15. *tarpaṇa*, offering of water, and 16. *namaskāra*, obeisance.

The set of 64 offerings (*catuḥ-ṣaṣṭy-upacārāḥ*)

The system of sixty-four offerings, known as *catuḥ-ṣaṣṭy-upacāra*, includes offering *pādyā*, water to wash one's *iṣṭa-deva*'s lotus feet; *arghya*, water offered as a token of respect; *svāgata*, welcoming Him; *praśna*, enquiring about His welfare; *āsana-pradāna*, offering Him a place to sit; *sugandhi-taila*, massaging His body with sweet-scented oil; *snāna-graha-praveśa*, taking Him to the place of bath; *snāna-maṇḍapa-upaveśana*, seating Him in a *maṇḍapa*¹¹ of gems for bathing; *udvartana*, rubbing, cleaning and washing His body with suitable materials; *uvatana*, applying oil; *uṣṇodaka-snāna*, bathing Him with warm water; *kanaka-kumbha-sarva-tīrthābhiṣeka*, bathing Him with water from all holy places using a golden pot; *dhautā-vastra-aṅga-mārjana*, wiping His body with a dry and clean cloth; *paridheya-rakta-varṇa-paṭṭa-vāsana*, dressing His lower body with attractive silk garments; *uttariya-rakta-varṇa-paṭṭa-vastra*, covering His upper body with attractive silk garments; *ālepa-maṇḍapa-praveśana*, taking Him to the *maṇḍapa* for anointing; *ālepa-maṇḍapa-upa-veśana*, seating Him in the *maṇḍapa* for anointing; *divya-gandha-dravya-lepana*, applying the paste of pure and fragrant substances such as sandalwood, *aguru* wood (aloe), turmeric, musk, camphor, *gorocanā*¹² on His body; decorating His hair with fragrant seasonal flowers such as various types of jasmine,

¹¹ A *maṇḍapa* can refer to an altar, pavillion, temple or a similar place.

¹² A bright yellow pigment found in the urine or bile of a Go.

lotus, *campaka* and *aśoka*; *alaṅkāra-maṇṭapa-praveśa*, taking Him into the *maṇṭapa* for decoration; *maṇimaya-pīṭha-upa-veśana*, seating Him on a throne studded with diamonds; *nava-ratna-mukūṭa-dāna*, offering Him a crown studded with the nine precious gems; *arddha-candra-bhūṣana*, offering an ornament that is shaped like a half-moon to His forehead; *sīmanta-sindūra-dāna*, applying *sindūra* (wood of a particular tree) paste at the *sīmanta*, the line that parts His hair; *tilaka-ratna-dāna*, applying *tilaka* to His forehead; *kṛṣṇāguru-añjana-pradāna*, anointing His eyes with salve made from black *aguru* wood; decorating Him with earrings and a nose ring; *adhara-yāvaka*, applying lipstick to His lips; decorating Him with various types of necklaces of different sizes and designs, made of gold, including a large one and a necklace of pearls made from a single string; *catuḥ-ṣaṣṭika-hāra*, a necklace made of 64 beads; *keyūra-yugala*, decorating both of His upper arms with golden and silver bracelets; *valaya-catustaya*, decorating Him with a set of four bracelets worn on the wrist; adorning Him with ornaments known as *ummi-kāvalī* and *śobhā*, as well as with a thread around the waist known as *kāñcī*; ornamenting Him with *pāda-kataka* and *valaya*, golden bracelets for legs and wrists, with *ratna-nūpura*, anklets studded with diamonds, and rings for the toes; *pāśa* and *aṅkuśa*, offering a rope to one of His hands and a goad to the other; then (if one's deity has two more hands), offering a bow known as *punḍra* made of sugarcane to one, and an arrow made of flowers to the other; *māṇikya-pāduka*, offering Him shoes studded with rubies; *siṃhāsana*, seating Him on a throne along with other *devas* who have similar weapons; seating Him on a bed known as *kāmeśvara*; offering Him in a cup a sweet preparation known as *amṛta*; *ācamanīya*, giving Him some water to sip;

karpūra-vāṭikā, offering Him a pill made of camphor; *āman-dollāsa evam vilāsa-hāsyā*, telling Him pleasant events as well as sharing light moments with Him; *maṅgala-ārati*, offering Him *ārati*; *śveta-cchattrā*, positioning a white umbrella above His head; *cāmara-yugala*, fanning Him with *cāmara* (a whisk made from yak's tail) from His right and left side; *darpaṇa*, showing Him His ornaments in a mirror; *tāla-vṛnta*, fanning Him with a fan made of the palmyra leaves; *gandha-puspa-dhūpa-dīpa-naivedya-pāṇīya*, and offering Him sandalwood paste, flowers, incense, lamp, food and drink.

In case it is not possible to offer these sixty-four items, the steady-minded *sādhaka* will obtain the same fruits by chanting the *upacāra-pradāna-mantra*, as it has been demonstrated in the *Nava-Ratneśvara*:

*catuh-ṣaṣṭy-upacārāṇām abhāve tan-manuṁ japet
tat tad eva phalaṁ vindyāt sādhaḥ sthira-mānasah*

Thirty-two offences against sevā

1. Entering one's *iṣṭa-deva*'s temple wearing shoes, or riding on a vehicle.
2. Not performing *sevā* to Śrī Viṣṇu in a festival related to Him.
3. Not offering obeisance to Śrī Viṣṇu while being present before Him.
4. Offering obeisance to one's *iṣṭa-deva* in an impure condition, or without washing one's mouth and hands after taking *prasādam* (*ucchiṣṭa*).
5. Offering *praṇāma* using only one hand.
6. Circumambulating someone else in the presence of Śrī Viṣṇu.
7. Spreading out one's legs in front of Śrī Viṣṇu.

8. Sitting in front of one's *iṣṭa-deva* in the *paryanka* (bedlike posture).
9. Sleeping in front of one's *iṣṭa-deva*.
10. Eating in front of one's *iṣṭa-deva*.
11. Telling a lie in front of one's *iṣṭa-deva*.
12. Speaking loudly in front of one's *iṣṭa-deva*.
13. Conversing with each other in front of one's *iṣṭa-deva*.
14. Crying out or lamenting in front of one's *iṣṭa-deva*.
15. Quarrelling in front of one's *iṣṭa-deva*.
16. Reprimanding or chastising someone in front of one's *iṣṭa-deva*.
17. Doing a favor or giving blessings to someone in front of one's *iṣṭa-deva*.
18. Speaking harsh words to women in front of one's *iṣṭa-deva*.
19. Being covered in a shawl or blanket in front of one's *iṣṭa-deva*.
20. Criticizing someone in front of one's *iṣṭa-deva*.
21. Praising someone in front of one's *iṣṭa-deva*.
22. Using obscene, vulgar or foul language in front of one's *iṣṭa-deva*.
23. Passing gas in front of one's *iṣṭa-deva*.
24. Not offering *upacāra* (service, articles etc) to one's *iṣṭa-deva* commensurate with one's abilities.
25. Taking food that has not been offered to one's *iṣṭa-deva*.
26. First offering something (such as food) to someone else and then offering the remainder to one's *iṣṭa-deva*.
27. Not offering one's *iṣṭa-deva* articles that are appropriate the time of the day or season of the year.
28. Sitting before one's *iṣṭa-deva* without shyness, or reservation (or being extravagant).

29. Praising the fraud or deceit of someone in front of one's *iṣṭa-deva*.
30. Not offering praise to one's guru while before him; instead remaining totally silent.
31. Praising oneself in front of the guru or one's *iṣṭa-deva*.
32. Condemning or speaking lowly of other *devatās*.

It is said in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (12.13.21):

*nāma-saṅkīrtanam yasya sarva-pāpa-praṇāśanam
praṇāmo duḥkha-śamanas taṁ namāmi harim param*

I bow down to that Supreme Person Śrī Hari, the chanting of Whose names completely destroys all sins and bowing down to Whom removes all one's miseries.

4. Mānasika-Sādhana

The practice of internal discipline

To always remember Śrī Hari is the highest principle. If Hari is always remembered then there is no *doṣa* (fault) even if one does not follow other injunctions. In other words, if one always remembers the instruction "Never forget Hari" there is no necessity to follow other rules.

In fact, it is only by forgetting Śrī Hari that the *jīva* (living entity) is in an adverse position. On the other hand, it is only by thinking continuously of Śrī Hari that the *jīva* can cross over the adversity and become situated in the world of *ānanda* (bliss). Having entered this realm of *ānanda* with the help of his mind, the *jīva* no longer needs to roam in the material world. As the Śruti says, *na sa punar āvartate*: "He never returns again."

Although the path of remembering Śrī Hari is the path that leads to the highest good and bliss, it is in opposition to the path that we normally follow due to our unfavorable nature. As going against what one is habituated to can be painful, following this supreme path also appears full of pain. It is only by rigorous discipline and practice that we can convert our nature to one favorable to becoming blissful. For this, we must necessarily possess genuine unpretentious enthusiasm.

The Śruti also teaches, *nāyam ātmā bala-hīnena labhyaḥ*: "One who is devoid of strength cannot acquire spiritual success." The word *bala*, meaning "strength", indicates insuppressible zeal for *bhajana* (service). Doing *bhajana* with enthusiasm and commitment, while tolerating misery and not giving much importance

to it, one attains the supreme goal in many ways. Nurturing such an experience just within oneself, along with rendering service to the name of Śrī Hari, is the essence of *smṛti-sādhana* (practice of remembering). This *sādhana*, when implicitly performed in all activities with resoluteness, is the supreme means to attain the highest destination. Remaining silent in the midst of one's duties, one must constantly remember the name, form, qualities and *līlās* (activities) of one's *iṣṭa-deva*. One should never abandon such mental remembrance and leave the mind empty, since remembrance is the *prāṇa* (the life-giving substance) of the mind. Hence, it must not be neglected.

A life of *bhajana* that is free of show and display is indeed ideal. In fact, one should not externally display the signs and symptoms of his *bhajana*, whether natural or artificial. By making a show, one's strength is destroyed and one enters into the region of falsehood and eventually falls into deep hell. Therefore, not counting those items that are anyway externally visible, such as the *mālā*, *tilaka* and other activities of worship, one should carefully cover one's inner *upāsana* and ensure that it is not manifest outside. Otherwise one's *sādhana* will not lead to any tangible result.

The path of *bhakti*, consisting of nine limbs, is an extremely confidential one. The first of these is *śravaṇa*. This aspect includes the name, form, qualities and activities of one's *iṣṭa-devatā*, along with topics related to *ātma-tattva*, or knowledge bearing on *ātma*. Listening to authoritative scriptures such as Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is also considered *śravaṇa*.

However, listening to scriptural discussions published in various books and all sorts of magazines and newspapers written by unqualified people is improper, even if such discussions pertain to the highest knowledge. The reason for this is that such discussions are interspersed with ignorance and are like poison that can destroy

life. Hearing them obstructs the supreme path because the dirt and impurity in the heart of the writer contaminates the heart of the reader.

Listening to lectures of public speakers on the Bhāgavatam is also harmful, since the show and glitter of the event and the feelings, emotions and moods displayed by the speakers (that in reality are opposed to *bhakti*) capture the heart of the practitioner. The false messages and conclusions presented by such speakers give birth to incorrect *saṁskāras* (impressions) in the hearts of the listeners. One must listen to discussions on Śrī Hari only from a saintly guru, and study the scriptures and reflect on them under his guidance.

Kīrtana and *smaraṇa*, or glorifying, singing about and remembering the name, form, qualities and activities of Śrī Hari are the next limbs of *bhakti*. The others are *vandana* (paying obeisances), *dāśya* (servitorship), *sakhya* (friendship), *ātma-nivedana* (surrender of one's own self), *pāda-sevana* (serving His feet) and *arcanā* (worship).

As *premā* is a matter of the heart, the aspirant must deliberately and carefully hide the emotions and feelings of love and affection that he feels towards his *iṣṭa-devatā* to the best of his abilities since by doing so his true feelings and emotions grow richer and deeper.

On the other hand, by publicly displaying these sentiments and emotions, such as shedding tears or trembling, his true feelings become feeble and weak, and authentic *anubhūti* and *prīti* are lost from the heart. *Anubhūti* refers to experiencing a deep awareness of the name, form, qualities and *līlās* of one's *iṣṭa-devatā*, while *prīti* means those moods, emotions and feelings that give pleasure to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The sādhanā of seeing oneness between the world and one's iṣṭa-devatā

One must attempt to see everything in this world with the same vision that one adopts with one's iṣṭa-devatā. That is to say, one's attitude towards all beings must be the same as that which one has with one's beloved deity. Śrī Viṣṇu resides in every jīva; thus, he who does the worship of Viṣṇu without knowing or acknowledging this is a great sinner.

Indeed, such activity is equivalent to that of a person who offers respect to someone by touching his feet with one hand, and at the same time harms him by throwing a brick at him with the other. *Dharma* is that which has a provision for respecting every living entity. One who lacks such faith is called a *dharmā-dhvajī* – a hypocrite or an impostor.

The meaning of *upāsana* is regarding and behaving towards all living beings in the same respectful manner as one would towards one's deity. Praising, worshiping and acting favorably to someone with the desire to gain something in return from him obstruct the pursuit of true knowledge. Hence, to direct individualistic praise or condemnation towards a particular person with such motivation must be avoided. Rather, the scriptures urge us to view the world through the eyes of true reality (*tattva-drṣṭi*).

Therefore, he who wishes to seriously pursue *dharmā* must take to the spiritual path (*nivṛtti-mārga*) where one should never idolize an individual engrossed in material profit, fame and worship, however well endowed with good qualities and discipline he may be; rather the association and philosophy of such a person must be completely abandoned.

The practice of Rāmyā Upāsana

“*pahilahī rāga nayana-bhaṅgyā bhela anudina bādhalā, avadhina gela.*”¹³ In this saying, there is a predominance of *āntar-dharma* or that practice of *dharma* which is deeply hidden within one’s heart. Through this internal practice an object, by virtue of its resemblance to something that has been previously experienced, attracts the heart and drowns it in attachment.

Āntar-dharma is divided into two, based on the presence or absence of *bhāva*. The thoughts, feelings, moods of surrender and service inclined towards giving joy and pleasure to one’s *iṣṭa* (understood as all living beings as well as one’s adorable deity), along with hankering to attain such service, constitute *bhāva*. When such *bhāva* is present, one does not possess even a small drop of desire for one’s own pleasure and happiness.

When the desire for one’s own pleasure and happiness exists, it indicates *abhāva*: the absence of *bhāva*. It is only in pursuit of personal pleasure and happiness that one indulges in *kāmya-karma* (activities driven by fruitive desires) whereas when the “I” is absent, one genuinely experiences the *bhāva* oriented towards giving pleasure to one’s *iṣṭa-deva*.

Thus it is appropriately said, *abhimāni bhakti-hīn jagmājhe sei dīn vṛthātār aśeṣa bhāvanā*: “One who has *abhimāna* or the “I” feeling and is devoid of *bhakti*, is truly a poor person in this world, and all his other concerns are essentially useless.”

¹³ This Bengali saying with a mix of Vraja-bhāṣā is in relation to *vraja-bhakti*. The people of Vraja first heard Kṛṣṇa’s name, then they saw Him and then left their attachments (*tyāga*), surrendered all to Him (*samarpaṇa*) and served Him (*sevā*). This shows how the object of love in the path of pure *bhakti* is first captured by the eyes (or the senses) and deposited in the heart, where it turns into a deep attachment or *mamatva*, which then grows without bounds.

The above saying is filled with meaning. The *ahankāra* in the form of "I", "me" and "mine" only supports the feelings and desires of giving happiness to one's own self. Unless the practitioner can free himself from such feelings, no *sādhana* can ever lead him to success. When the qualities born of such *sādhana* nourish this type of self-centeredness, the door to developing *mamatva* (closeness and intimacy) with one's *iṣṭa-deva* becomes closed. The subsequent dejection results in his incapability to recognize the expansive covering of *abhāva*, which prevents him from realizing the pure *bhāva*. By mistaking *abhāva* with *bhāva*, all of his *sādhana* is completely wasted.

Basically, it is due to the inability to distinguish between true *bhāva* and *abhāva* that *upadharma* or *pseudo-dharma* comes into existence. In fact, this world is filled with such *pseudo-dharma*.

Nowadays, public speeches on spiritual topics and narrations of activities performed by God have become popular. Nevertheless, all of these are just displays of one's own material feelings and experiences (*prākṛta-rasa*). Both the speaker as well as the listener are in the same category although they appear to be different externally. In these public programs, the love, affection and joy experienced are transient and under the purview of *abhāva*. Such 'saintly people' are not worthy of service.

By his body, speech and mind, the aspirant should continuously immerse himself in *bhakti* – such *sādhana* will bring him perfection. Of course, in *ramyā upāsana*, these three items must be put into practice in a genuine manner.

Activities performed with the body such as *paricaryā* (physical service) and *arcana* (deity worship) are called *kāyika-sādhana*, or bodily practice. However, all existence has its basis in the mind which is why *mānasika-sādhana*, or mental practice, is of crucial importance. This involves engaging the mind in the service of one's *iṣṭa* as much as possible and when this becomes joyful, it is

called *ramyā upāsanā*. Among the different types of *mānasika-sādhana*, *ramyā upāsanā* is performed by contemplating on the sweet activities of one's *iṣṭa* and serving Him in a pleasing and favorable manner in one's spiritual body. Such meditation is done continuously day and night.

It is rare to find a person who has the qualifications to do this kind of *sādhana*. Such a person must be knowledgeable about the *śāstra*, experienced, sincere, a keen follower, surrendered to his guru and *iṣṭa*, free from the desires for sense enjoyment, have one-pointed focus on his *iṣṭa* as well as knowledge of the Truth, reside alone and be an expert in rendering service (*bhajana*). Only he is truly qualified to do *ramyā upāsanā*.

On the other hand, he who is always troubled by desires for material profit, for being adored and worshiped by others, for becoming publicly famous and by the urge to fulfill sense pleasures, is absolutely unqualified for pursuing this path. At present, those who publicly perform *bhajana* and narrate the activities of God are perceived by others as qualified for *ramyā upāsanā* but in truth all their activities are just means to their sustenance; they are not really qualified.

Why are such people not qualified? To understand this well, one must acquire proper and thorough knowledge from the guru and the *śāstra*. The essence is this: as long as the aspirant is unable to establish and experience the pure form of his *iṣṭa* in his heart, as long as he is unable to give up the identification with his *janma* (birth), *karma* (caste-prescribed duties), *varṇa* (social segment such as *brāhmaṇa* or *kṣatriya*), *āśrama* (order in life such as *brahmacārī*, *gṛhastha* or *sannyāsī*), *jāti* (caste or sub-community) and love for his body, he will never have the strength to perform this *sādhana*. All thoughts, desires and feelings of identification that arise from the "I" are part of *abhāva*. To give up such unwanted things, he must first become completely aware of

them. Then, to attain his *iṣṭa-deva*, it is essential to completely understand and identify with the hearts (desires, thoughts and feelings) of the servants and followers of his *iṣṭa*. Otherwise, it is impossible either to give up the unwanted things, or to attain the desired results. To understand this matter, one must learn about three types of paths.

Śaraṇāgati

The first is the path of *śaraṇāgati* (surrender). This is the supreme *sādhana*, superior to all others, and is characterized by six attitudes that the successful aspirant adopts:

1. He possesses the desire that the *iṣṭa-deva* should always be pleased and happy.
2. He gives up everything that the *iṣṭa-deva* dislikes or does not want.
3. He has complete faith that his *iṣṭa-deva* is always his protector, and is full of auspiciousness and goodness. Even if something inauspicious or unpleasant happens, he nurtures the belief that He will eventually lead him to an auspicious outcome. He does not get disturbed (excited or depressed) by happy and sad situations that arise from his past *karma* and fully engages in his work with his body, speech and mind.
4. He considers his *iṣṭa-deva* to be his maintainer and protector, and nobody else. This involves giving up the mundane way of thinking in which, during times of trouble, one gives up simplicity and straightforwardness, inventing ideas for cheating others and taking shelter of everybody without discrimination. In the path that leads to the Supreme, such behavior is discarded. With one's *iṣṭa*, one must always be simple and straightforward.

5. He realizes that his *iṣṭa-deva* is the only doer. Neither himself nor the others are doers in the true sense. This realization comes only by pure contemplation of scriptural knowledge. When this realization is present, one does not feel an excessive liking towards activities that give pleasure, nor does one feel hatred for those that are unpleasant; indeed *rāga* (attachment) and *dveṣa* (hatred) are the causes of material bondage. If the aspirant becomes free from them, he does not become caught in *karma* and gets thus free from *samsāra*.

6. He acknowledges the greatness and supremacy of the *iṣṭa-deva* and his minuteness before Him.

The idea of what entails *śaraṇāgati* is summarized in the following verse:

*ānukūlyasya saṅkalpaḥ prātikūlyasya varjanam
rakṣiṣyatīti viśvāso gopṭṛtve varaṇam tathā
ātma-nikṣepa-kārpanye śaḍ-vidhā śaraṇāgatiḥ*

1. *ānukūlyasya saṅkalpaḥ*: nurturing such attitudes, feelings and desires, and performing such actions that give happiness and pleasure to one's *iṣṭa*, one's guru and all living beings.
2. *prātikūlyasya varjanam*: giving up all those attitudes, feelings, desires and actions that make them unhappy or cause them pain.
3. *rakṣiṣyatīti viśvāso*: the faith that "He will protect me".
4. *gopṭṛtve varaṇam tathā*: considering and soliciting one's *iṣṭa* to be one's protector.
5. *ātma-nikṣepa*: recognizing that the *Īśvara* is the doer and no one else has any doership.
6. *kārpanyaḥ*: acknowledging that the *Īśvara* is the master and one is inferior with respect to Him at all times.

Being free from envy (*nirmatsara*)

The Pāramahansa-Saṁhitā 1.1.2 (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam) describes the person who is qualified to perform the highest *dharma*. In it, too, internal activity is emphasized. Without internal purity, or the purity of the mind, external symbols only lead to undesirable phenomena (*anarthas*). Thus, it is only by internal *sādhana* that one can truly become qualified:

projjhita-kaitavo'tra paramo nirmatsarāṇām satām

projjhita = *pra* + *ujjhita*, completely uprooted;

kaitava = the tendency to cheat.

These two words indicate that such a person does not have even the slightest inclination for liberation (*mukti*), only the desire to do *sevā*. This is not the path of doing business, exchange, barter, or trade. A self-centered and arrogant person only desires to enjoy and, as a result, is continually caught in the stream of birth and death. A person with the knowledge of the Truth, however, attempts to free himself from this cycle. For that he needs to internalize the following two notions:

First: not to harbor thoughts such as "If I keep doing *upāsana*, I will get liberation even if I don't want it" as that reflects an underlying desire for *mukti*.

Second: to be genuinely saintly, that is, to be free from envy (*nirmatsara*) as well as anxiety and hankering for the wealth of others.

Such truly saintly persons feel the pain of others and become very unhappy when they see their miseries whereas those who are like hunters rejoice in others' distress. Similarly, a virtuous person experiences happiness upon seeing the happiness of those around him while other people find this very difficult. Unfortunately, such saints who genuinely feel this way are very rare.

By contrast, an ungrateful person may receive a favor from another, but when by virtue of destiny is put in a miserable situation by the latter, he forgets the earlier favors and develops enmity and hatred towards him. Such a person who despite being endowed with a good family and wealth always considers himself miserable and unhappy is doubtless an abode of envy and hatred (*matsara*).

Sometimes, one may receive help from an individual who usually gives one trouble. Although such an occasion may be rare, a grateful person always appreciates and acknowledges such a favor and owing to it, he praises and speaks favorably of that individual. He forgets or ignores the earlier distress that he has received, or considers that trouble as having risen due to his own shortcomings. Such a person is never distressed by the various miseries of this *samsāra* and is truly *nirmatsara*.

Being completely free from the tendencies to seek enjoyment or liberation and possessing *sevā-bhāva*, or the desire to serve, which includes sincerely empathizing with the happiness and misery of others, is the basic mood of *kevalā bhakti* (exclusive devotion).

The rules of *yama* and *niyama*

To achieve such a state of mind, heart or consciousness, it is necessary to perform *mānasika-sādhana*. Here, it is essential to observe the rules of *yama* and *niyama*. Without *sādhana* involving these, it is not possible to attain liberation and *sevā-bhāva*. Although *yama* and *niyama* are not described explicitly in *ramyā upāsanā*, they are implicitly present in its limbs such as *śravaṇa* or *kīrtana*, and thus also in *sevā-bhāva*. If *yama* and *niyama* are not observed in a person who appears to be doing *sevā* and having *sevā-bhāva*, it must be understood that his *sādhana* is not alright.

Yama and *niyama* have five aspects each. The five aspects of *yama* are:

1. *Ahimsā*: abstaining oneself from all activities that can physically or mentally trouble, pain or offend other living entities. In fact, one should not even mentally nourish such thoughts and feelings. As long as self-centeredness (or the "I" consciousness) remains, the tendency to commit *himsā* (distress and pain) by activities such as ridiculing others will be inevitable. In a subtle way, this tendency will remain as long as the "I" remains.

Indeed, it is possible to know what *himsā* is, in a gross sense, but *himsā* in its subtle sense is very difficult to detect. The propensity to do *himsā* can be completely wiped out by not causing distress to any living being with one's body, mind and speech, and beholding everything with the same vision one adopts with one's *iṣṭa-deva*.

2. *Satya*: speaking and thinking about things as they are. Magnifying and distorting them through *rāga* (attachment) and *dveṣa* (hatred) opposes *satya*. Even falsely exaggerating the qualities of one's own Gurudeva goes against this principle. In fact, while describing the qualities of one's Gurudeva, it is necessary to emphasize the glories of the *Īśvara*.

3. *Asteya*: not having a tendency to steal. Even the desire to have something that does not belong to one is *steya*, and being free from such a tendency is *asteya*.

4. *Brahmacarya*: renouncing all thoughts, feelings and actions pertaining to sexual relationships between man and woman in one's mind, speech and body is the essence of *brahmacarya*.

5. *Aparigraha*: not taking articles which belong to others, or not accumulating more wealth and possessions than one actually needs.

The five limbs of *niyama* are as follows:

6. *Śauca*: keeping the body clean using items such as mud and water (*bāhya-śauca*, or external cleanliness), and keeping the mind and heart pure by nurturing saintly qualities such as kindness and affection towards other living beings (*antaḥ-śauca*, or internal cleanliness).

7. *Santoṣa*: when one selflessly helps, serves and sacrifices oneself for others without wishing anything in return one feels inner happiness. When one is able to maintain this attitude of selfless service even during the times of great difficulty, one experiences real *santoṣa* (happiness).

With the mind troubled by misery and distress, one can neither meditate on one's *iṣṭa-deva* or on His names, nor gain the experience of true *sevā-bhāva*, nor gain higher realization. Joy, delight and other forms of pleasure that are born of the quality of *rajas* are also obstacles to genuine *sevā-bhāva* since unfeigned *santoṣa* comes with the feelings that are *sāttvika*, pure and filled with love and affection.

8. *Tapasya*: when the heart is contaminated with desires for sense enjoyment, pure *sevā-bhāva* and inner happiness cannot manifest in it; hence, it is necessary to perform *tapasya* (austerity) such as *vratas* (vows and observances) and *upavāsas* (fasting) that lead to forsaking of such gratification.

9. *Svādhyāya*: activities such as *japa* or reflecting on the words of scriptures.

10. *Īśvara-praṇidhāna*: meditating upon the *Īśvara*.

The observances of *yama* and *niyama* form parts of the process of *yoga*. Without them it is not possible to achieve one's desired goal.

Countering unfavorable feelings

The person who is following the path of *ramyā upāsana* must perform this *sādhana* by attentively listening to the activities of Śrī Hari and the stories of His devotees. This serves as a remedy especially when feelings that oppose *bhakti* arise in his heart.

More specifically, when feelings of violence develop, he must contemplate His *kāruṇya-līlā* (activities that highlight the kindness of Hari and His devotees); when the tendency towards falsehood appears, he must reflect on *satya-niṣṭhā*, or activities that show determination to be truthful; when greed emerges, renunciation and sacrifice must be remembered; when lust and desire for sex come out, then activities characterized by renunciation (*vairāgya-līlā*) must be pondered over; and when the tendency to accumulate wealth and property arises, he must listen to, sing about and remember works of saints who did not have any residence or belongings.

According to sages, one must consciously and intentionally counter the undesirable and disturbing tendencies such as violence or hatred within oneself by generating feelings that oppose them. If one does not do this, one can neither get any benefit by meditating on one's *iṣṭa-deva* nor derive fruits of true *sevā-bhāva* since genuine *sevā-bhāva* only appears in the heart that is pure and happy.

To achieve such true happiness of the heart, it is essential to practice internal discipline. For example, when the practitioner sees the prosperity of another with whom he lacks friendship, or bears a conflict, he may feel envious of that person. When this happens, he must seek to feel the same happiness that he experiences when someone close to himself becomes prosperous or successful.

Likewise, he must counter the impure feeling of happiness that he feels during the misery of his enemy (or someone in conflict) by thinking over the sadness that he would feel when someone dear to himself is miserable. And, when his heart burns with envy upon seeing his enemy or competitor in a successful position, he must appease it by meditating upon the happiness that one feels when someone close to one's heart becomes successful.

The importance of sat-saṅga

In *ramyā upāsanā*, meditating upon the names of one's *iṣṭa* is the most predominant *sādhana*. The manner of doing it is as follows: one must consider oneself lower than a blade of grass, be free from pride, and selfless and tolerant like a tree. One must offer respect to all living beings, understanding that one's *iṣṭa* is present everywhere.

Here, however, a doubt can be raised: only a truly elevated person is qualified to worship the *Īśvara*, hence by thinking of oneself as lowly, will not one become degraded?

This is not so because here *asat-saṅga-tyāga*, or giving up false association, is the fundamental practice. True *sevā-bhāva* can only be developed by *sat-saṅga*, or keeping company with saintly persons. The protection of this *bhāva* happens by virtue of *sat-saṅga* too; hence *sat-saṅga*, service to one's *iṣṭa-deva* and remembering His names are one's essential duties.

It should be noted here that *sat-saṅga* actually refers to the acceptance of *sat-sāstra*, or scriptures that contain knowledge of the Truth, and not of any individual. If one does not understand this, one will surely fall down.

Embracing *sat-saṅga* is very important but rejecting or giving up *asat-saṅga* is even more significant.

Asat-saṅga specifically means the desires for sense pleasure and liberation. By not giving up either of them, one does not gain the qualification to perform *sevā*. The term *asat-saṅga-tyāga* not only means giving no importance to these *asat* items, but also not developing hatred towards, or ridiculing, them. The term "*asādhū*" is given to persons who are attached to these things in order to encourage us to give up our attachment to them. By maintaining attachment to *asat*, one's own *sevā-bhāva* is destroyed which is why *asat-saṅga* must completely be avoided.

The gurudeva, who represents *sat-saṅga*, is called an *ācārya*. He must be a person who is knowledgeable in the *śāstras*, has experienced the Truth and practices his teachings meticulously. One must necessarily reside under the shelter of such a guru and live one's life following *dharma*.

Prayers and verses of praise for the deities of Viṣṇu, Śiva, Durgā, Sūrya and Gaṇeśa are given in Appendix C.

Appendix A

The Glories of Tulasī

The glories of worshiping the Tulasī-vana¹⁴ are also described in the Skanda-Purāṇa as follows:

*śravaṇa-dvādaśī yoge śālagrāma-śilārcane
yat phalaṁ saṅgame proktaṁ tulasī-pūjanena tat*

By worshiping the Śālagrāma-śilā on Śravaṇā-Dvādaśī one obtains the same results as by worshiping Tulasī.

It is also said in the Garuḍa-Purāṇa:

*dhātṛī-phalena yat puṇyaṁ jayantyām samupoṣaṇe
khagendra bhavate nṛṇāṁ tulasī-pūjanena tat
prayāga-snāna-niratau kāśyām prāṇa-vimokṣaṇe
yat phalaṁ vihitam devais tulasī-pūjanena tat*

O king of birds, whatever fruits one achieves by serving the āmalakī tree¹⁵, whatever benefits one obtains by fasting on Kṛṣṇa-Janmāṣṭamī and Jayantī-Mahādvādaśī (or the Dvādaśī with Rohiṇī-Nakṣatra), one gets the same results by the worship of Tulasī. By worshiping her, one receives the same benefits as the devas prescribe for giving up one's body in Kāśī, or having a bath in Prayāga (the confluence of the rivers Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī).

¹⁴ Literally "Tulasī forest", it refers to the cluster of Tulasī plants that are planted together in households for worship.

¹⁵ Āmalakī (āmlā, amlakī, dhātṛī) is the sacred myrobalan tree/fruit. Its scientific name is *Emblica officinalis*.

It is said in the Agastya-Samhitā:

*caturṇām api varṇānām āśramānām viśeṣataḥ
strīṇāṃ ca puruṣānāṃ ca pūjiteṣāṃ dadāti hi
tulasī ropitā siktā sprṣṭā ca pāvayet
ārādhitā prayatnena sarva-kāma-phala-pradā*

Both men and women, belonging to any of the four *varṇas* (*brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* and *śūdra*) as well as any of the four *āśramas* (*brahmacarya*, *gṛhastha*, *vānaprastha* and *sannyāsa*) get their desires fulfilled by worshiping Tulasī. When she is planted, touched and offered water, Tulasī imparts purification, and by worshiping her with due effort, she satisfies all desires.

Further,

*pradakṣiṇaṃ bhramitvā ye namaskurvanti nityaśaḥ
na teṣāṃ duritaṃ kiñcid akṣiṇaṃ avaśiṣyate*

All sins are destroyed of those who circumambulate and offer obeisance to Tulasī every day. For such persons, there is no sin left undestroyed.

It is said in the Bṛhan-Nāradiya-Purāṇa (Nārada-Purāṇa):

*pūjyamānā ca tulasī yasya veśmani tiṣṭhati
tasya sarvāṇi śreyāṃsi varddhante 'har ahar dvijāḥ*

O *brāhmaṇas*! In the house where the worshipable Tulasī resides, opulence keeps growing day by day.

Likewise, it is said in the Padma-Purāṇa in the conversation between Devadūta and Vikundāla:

*pakṣe pakṣe tu samprāpte dvādaśyām vaiśya-sattama
brahmādayo 'pi kurvanti tulasī-vana-pūjanam*

O best among the *Vaiśyas*! Even the *devās* beginning with Śrī *Brahmā* worship the Tulasī-vana on every *Dvādaśī*.

The greatness of *Ṭulasī-Stuti* (praising *Ṭulasī*) is described in this manner:

*ananya-manasā nityam ṭulasīm stauti yo narah
pitr-deva-manuṣyāṇām priyo bhavati sarvadā*

He who, with a focused mind, worships and praises *Ṭulasī* every day, forever becomes very dear to the forefathers, to the *devas* and to other human beings as well.

The *Skanda-Purāṇa* describes the exalted position of the forest of *Ṭulasī* in the following fashion:

*ratim badhnāti nānyatra ṭulasī-kānanam vinā
deva-devo jagat-svāmi kali-kāle viśeṣataḥ*

In the age of *Kali*, the master of the universe and God of the gods *Śrī Keśava* has a special attachment to no place other than a forest of *Ṭulasī*.

*hitvā tirtha-sahasrāṇi sarvān api śiloccayān
ṭulasī-kānane nityam kalau tiṣṭhati keśavaḥ*

In this age, giving up thousands of pilgrimage centers and mountains, He always resides in a *Ṭulasī* forest.

*nirīkṣitā narair yas tu ṭulasī-vana-vāṭikā
ropitā yaiś ca vidhinā samprāptam paramam padam*

One who has seen a *Ṭulasī* forest or planted one (as prescribed) will attain the supreme abode.

*na dhātṛī sapthalā yatra na viṣṇus ṭulasī-vanam
tat śmaśāna-samam sthānam santi yatra na vaiṣṇavāḥ*

Where there is no fruit-bearing *dhātṛī* tree, no deity (*mūrti*) of *Śrī Viṣṇu*, no *Ṭulasī* forest or no *Vaiṣṇavas*, such a place is equivalent to a cremation ground or a cemetery.

*keśavārthe kalau ye tu ropayantiha bhū-tale
kim kariṣyaty asantuṣṭo yamo 'pi saha kiṅkaraiḥ*

Yamarāja becomes unhappy when a person plants Tulasī in order to serve Śrī Keśava here on Earth, since even with the help of all his servants he cannot do anything to him.

*tulasyā ropanam kāryam śravaṇena viśeṣataḥ
aparādha-sahasrāṇi kṣamate puruṣottamaḥ*

In particular, when a person plants Tulasī on the day of Śravaṇa-Nakṣatra, Śrī Puruṣottama (Viṣṇu) pardons him a thousand offences.

*devālayeṣu sarveṣu puṇya-kṣetreṣu yo narah
vāpayet tulasīm puṇyām tat tīrtham cakrapāṇinam*

When a person plants sacred Tulasī in various temples and such holy places, that site becomes a pilgrimage spot for Śrī Cakrapāṇi (Viṣṇu).

*ghaṭair yantra-ghaṭibhiś ca siñcitam tulasī-vanam
jala-dhārābhir viprendra prṇitam bhūvana-trayam*

O king of brāhmaṇas, he who waters Tulasī with a pot or any other suitable container pleases the three worlds.

In the conversation between Śrī Brahmā and Śrī Nārada in the Skanda-Purāṇa, it is said:

*tulasī-gandham ādāya yatra gacchati mārutah
diśo daśa ca pūtāḥ syur bhūta-grāmaś catur-vidhaḥ*

The breeze which carries the fragrance of a Tulasī forest purifies all of the ten directions and the living beings that it touches.

*tulasī-kānanodbhūtā chhāyā yatra bhaved dvija
tatra śrāddham pradātavyam pitṛṇām tṛpti-hetave*

*tulasī-bīja-nikaraḥ patate yatra nārada
piṇḍa-dānam kṛtam tatra piṭṇām dattam akṣayam*

O Nārada! The place where the shadow of Tulasī falls is fit for offering *śrāddha* for the pleasure of the forefathers. The same holds true for places where the seeds of Tulasī fall; indeed, such an offering never gets exhausted.

Further, it is also said:

*dr̥ṣṭā spr̥ṣṭā tathā dhyātā kirttitā namitā śrutā
ropitā sevitā nityam pūjitā tulasī śubhā
navadhā tulasī nityam ye bhajanti dine dine
yuga-koṭi-sahasrāṇi te vasanti harer gr̥he*

It is highly auspicious to daily see, touch, meditate on, praise, offer obeisance to, hear about, plant, serve, and worship Tulasī. One who serves Tulasī in these nine ways daily resides in the house of Śrī Hari for hundreds of *crores*¹⁶ of years.

*ropitā tulasī yāvat kurute mūla-vistaram
tāvat koṭi-sahasrāṇ tu tanoti sukr̥tam kalau*

With every root that Tulasī spreads she increases piety in the age of Kali a thousand *crore* times.

*yāvac chākhā-prasākhābhir bīja-puṣpaiḥ phalair mune
ropitā tulasī pumbhir varddhate vasudhā-tale
kule teṣāṃ tu ye bhaviṣyanti ye mṛtāḥ
ākalpam yuga-sāhasram teṣāṃ vāso harer gr̥he*

O muni! As the branches, sub-branches, seeds, flowers and fruits of Tulasī increase, the extent of time that the ancestors, relatives and descendants of him who has planted her will live in the house of Śrī Hari, will also increase.

¹⁶ The word *koṭi*, a commonly used measure in India, is translated as "crore", which is equal to ten million: 10,000,000.

In the Avāntī-Khaṇḍa of the Skanda-Purāṇa, it is said:

*tulasī ye vicinvanti dhanyās tat-kara-pallavāḥ
keśavārthe kalau ye ca ropayantīha bhū-tale
snāne dāne tathā dhyāne prāśane keśavārccane
tulasī dahate pāpam ropane kīrttane kalau*

Purifying are the hands of those who pick Tulasi or plant her for the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa here on this Earth. In the age of Kali, Tulasi burns all the sins of one who plants her, gives her in charity, meditates on her, uses her in the worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, bathes her, honors her as prasādam and sings her praises.

And in the Kāśī-Khaṇḍa, the instruction of Yamarāja to the Yamadūtas is as follows:

*tulasyālankṛtā ye ye tulasī-nāma-jāpakāḥ
tulasī-vana-pālā ye te tyājyā durato bhataḥ*

O my soldiers, listen! Those persons who are decorated with Tulasi, who chant the names of Tulasi and those who protect and take care of the Tulasi forest - please do not go near them.

It is described in the Dhruva-Caritra:

*tulasi yasya bhavane praty-aham paripūjyate
tad-grham nopasarpanti kadācid yama-kīṅkarāḥ*

The servants of Yama do not visit the household in which the worship of Tulasi is going on every day.

In the conversation between Devadūta and Viṣṇudāla in the Padma-Purāṇa, it is said:

*na paśyanti yamam vaiśya tulasī-vana-ropanāt
sarva-pāpa-haram sarva-kāma-dam tulasī-vanam*

O Vaiśya! Those who plant a Tulasi forest will never see Yama. Tulasi destroys all sins and fulfills all desires.

*tulasī-kānanam vaiśya gr̥he yasminś tu tiṣṭhate
tad-gr̥ham tīrtha-bhūtam hi no yānti yama-kinkarāḥ*

The house where a Tulasī forest is present is a place of pilgrimage and the servants of Yama do not go there.

*tāvad varṣa-sahasrāṇi yāvad bīja-dalāni ca
vasanti deva-loke tu tulasīm ropayanti ye*

One who plants Tulasī resides in heaven along with gods for as many thousands of years as there are seeds and leaves on the Tulasī that he has planted.

*tulasī-gandham āghrāya pitaras tuṣṭa-mānasah
prayānti garudārūdhāḥ tat-padam cakrapāṇinah*

By inhaling the fragrance of Tulasī, the contented forefathers travel to the abode of Śrī Cakrapāṇi (Viṣṇu) on the back of Śrī Garuḍa.

*darśanam narmadāyās tu gaṅgā-snānam viśām vara
tulasī-dala-samśparśah samam etat trayam smṛtam*

O best among Vaiśyas! These three activities – having darśana of the river Narmadā, having a bath in the Gaṅgā, and touching a leaf of Tulasī – are considered equivalent.

*ropanāt pālanāt sekād darśanāt sparśanād nṛṇām
tulasī dahate pāpam vān-mana-kāya-saṅcitam*

By planting, nurturing, watering, seeing and touching her, Tulasī burns all one's sins committed by body, mind and words.

*āmra-vṛkṣa-sahasreṇa pippalānām śatena ca
yat phalam hi tad ekena tulasī-viṭapena tu*

One gets the same benefits by planting just one plant of Tulasī as one gets by planting a thousand mango trees or a hundred pippala (sacred fig) trees.

*viṣṇu-pūjana-saṁyuktaḥ tulasīm yas tu ropayet
yugāyuta-daśaikam sa ropako ramate divi*

One who plants a Tulasī plant in connection with worshipping Viṣṇu enjoys for thousands of years in heaven, the abode of devās.

In the Vaiśākha-Māhātmya of the Padma-Purāṇa, it is said:

*puṣkarādīni tīrthāni gaṅgādyāḥ saritas tathā
vāsudevādayo devā vasanti tulasī-dale*

The devas led by Śrī Vāsudeva (Kṛṣṇa), along with the sacred lakes and the holy rivers such as the Gaṅgā, reside in the leaf of Tulasī.

*dāridrya-duḥkha-roḡārtti-pāpāni subahūny api
tulasī haratī kṣipram roḡān iva haritakī*

Just as the haritakī plant destroys all diseases very quickly, in the same manner Tulasī does away with all the fruits of one's uncountable sins, such as poverty, pain, diseases, depression or anxiety, very fast.

In the Kārtika-Māhātmya of the same Purāṇa, it is said:

*yad-grhe tulasī bhāti rakṣābhir jala-secanaiḥ
tad-grhaṁ yama-dūtās ca dūrato varjayanti hi*

The Yamadūtas keep a distance from the house in which Tulasī resides and is served by watering and nurturing.

*tulasyās tarpanam ye ca pitṛn uddiśya mānavāḥ
kurvanti teṣāṁ pītaras trptā varṣāyutam jalaiḥ*

If a person offers tarpaṇa to his forefathers with Tulasī, they too please this person by giving him water for thousands of years.

*paricaryān ca ye tasyā rakṣayālavāla-bandhanaiḥ
śuśrūṣito haris tais tu nātra kāryā vicāraṇā*

By protecting Tulasī with a water trench around her base
Śrī Hari is also served – there can be no doubt about this.

*nāvajñā jātu kāryāsyā vrkṣa-bhānān manīṣibhiḥ
yathā hi vāsudevasya vaikunṭhe bhoga-vigrahaḥ
śālagrāma-śilā-rūpaṁ sthāvaraṁ bhuvi drśyate
tathā lakṣmyaikyam āpannā tulasī bhoga-vigrahaḥ
aparaṁ sthāvaraṁ rūpaṁ bhuvi loka-hitāya vai
sprṣtā drṣtā rakṣitā ca mahā-pātaka-nāśinī*

One should never commit an offence against Tulasī thinking of her as just another immovable tree. Just as Śrī Vāsudeva eternally resides in Vaikunṭha, enjoying His līlas there, but takes the immovable form of Śālagrāma stone on Earth, similarly Tulasī who resides eternally in the form of Lakṣmī in her original form, takes the immovable form of a tree (Tulasī) for the welfare of the people on Earth. By touching her, having her darśana and protecting her, the gravest of one's sins are destroyed.

It is said in the Agastya-Saṁhitā:

*viṣṇos trailokya-nāthasya rāmasya janakātmajā
priyā tathaiva tulasī sarva-lokaika-pāvanī*

Just as Sītā, the daughter of King Janaka, is very dear to Śrī Rāma, the master of the three worlds, Tulasī, who purifies all the worlds, is also dear to Him.

*tulasī-vāṭikā yatra puṣpāntara-śatāvṛtā
śobhate rāghavas tatra sītayā sahitaḥ svayam*

Śrī Rāma Himself, along with Sītā, resides where a Tulasī forest shines brightly, covered in hundreds of flowers.

*tulasī-vipinasyāpi samantāt pāvanam sthalaṁ
krośa-mātram bhavaty eva gāṅgeyasyaiva pāthasaḥ*

Just as the land adjoining the river Gaṅgā is pure, similarly the land around a garden of Tulasī is also pure.

*tulasī-sannidhau prāṇān ye tyajanti munīśvara
na teṣāṁ naraka-kleśaḥ prayānti paramam padam*

O best of munis! One who leaves his body near Tulasī does not have to suffer the miseries of hell. Instead, he achieves the supreme abode.

*ananya-darśanāḥ prātar ye paśyanti tapo-dhana
aho-rātra-kṛtaṁ pāpaṁ tat-kṣaṇāt praharanti te*

O ascetic! In the morning, if a person has the darśana of Tulasī instead of the darśana of any other thing or being, all the sins that he has committed during day or night are destroyed instantaneously.

It is said in the Garuḍa-Purāṇa:

*kṛtaṁ yena mahā-bhāga tulasī-vana-ropanam
muktis tena bhaved dattā prāṇinām vinatā-suta*

O son of Vinatā (Garuḍa)! O most fortunate one! He who plants a Tulasī forest gives mukti to other living beings.

*tulasī vāpitā yena puṇyārāme vane grhe
pakṣindra tena satyoktaṁ lokāḥ sapta pratiṣṭhitāḥ*

O king of birds! Verily it can be said that he who plants Tulasī in a beautiful garden, in a forest or in his own home, has brought all the seven worlds to that place.

*tulasī-kānane yas tu muhūrttam api viśramet
janma-koṭi-kṛtān pāpān mucyate nātra saṁśayaḥ*

The person who rests for even a single moment in a forest of Tulasīs gets rid of all the sins that he has performed in a crore lifetimes. Of this, there is no doubt.

*pradakṣiṇaṁ yaḥ kurute paṭhan nāma-sahasrakam
tulasī-kānane nityaṁ yajñāyuta-phalaṁ labhet*

In a Tulasī forest, one who reads the Viṣṇu-Sahasra-Nāma and circumambulates Tulasī daily, achieves the fruits of tens of thousands of yajñas.

It is described in the Hari-Bhakti-Sudhodaya:

*nityaṁ sannihito viṣṇuḥ sasprhas tulasī-vane
api me 'kṣata-patraikaṁ kaścid dhanyo 'rpayed iti*

Śrī Viṣṇu always lovingly resides in a Tulasī forest so that some fortunate person may offer Him at least one leaf of Tulasī.

It is said in the Brhan-Nāradya-Purāṇa in relation to the Gaṅgā:

*saṁsāra-pāpa-vicchedi gaṅgā-nāma prakīrttitam
tathā tulasī bhaktiś ca hari-kīrtti-pravaktari*

Just as the glorification of the names of the Gaṅgā destroys all sins of this saṁsāra, so does the devotion both to Tulasī and to the person who sings the glories of Śrī Hari.

*tulasī-kānanaṁ yatra yatra padma-vanāni ca
purāṇa-paṭhanam yatra tatra sannihito hariḥ*

Śrī Hari resides wherever there is a forest of Tulasīs, a forest of lotuses, and where the Purāṇas are read and studied.

In the conversation between Śrī Yama and Śrī Bhagīratha in the Brhan-Nāradya-Purāṇa, it is said:

*tulasī-ropanam ye tu kurvate manujeśvara
teṣāṁ punya-phalaṁ vakṣye vadatas tvaṁ niśāmaya*

O best among the descendants of Manu! Please listen as I describe the auspicious fruits earned by those who plant Tulasī.

*sapta-kotī-kulair yukto mātṛtaḥ pitṛtas tathā
vaset kalpa-śatam sāgram nārāyaṇa-samīpa-gaḥ*

Such a person will reside near Śrī Nārāyaṇa for a hundred kalpas¹⁷, along with seven crore of his mother's as well as father's generations.

*tṛṇāni tulasī-mūlād yāvanty apahinoti vai
tāvatīr brahma-hatyā hi chinatty eva na saṁśayaḥ*

That many of one's sins of the magnitude of killing a brāhmaṇa are destroyed as many leaves one removes from the base of Tulasī (fallen on the ground); there can be no doubt about this.

*tulasyām siñcayed yas tu culukodaka-mātrakam
kṣīrodaśāyinā sārddham vased ācandra-tārakam*

One who waters Tulasī, even with a palmful of water, will reside along with Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu for as much time as there will be the moon and stars.

*kaṇṭakāvaraṇam vāpi vṛttim kāṣṭaiḥ karoti yaḥ
tulasyāḥ śṛṇu rājendra tasya puṇya-phalaṁ mahat
yāvad dināni santiṣṭhet kaṇṭakāvaraṇam prabho
kula-traya-yutas tāvat tiṣṭhed brahma-pade yugam
prākāra-kalpako yas tu tulasyā manujeśvara
kula-trayeṇa sahito viṣṇoḥ sārūpyatām vrajet*

One who makes a fence to protect Tulasī with thorns and thorny twigs gains tremendous pious benefits. O king of kings! Hear these. For each day that the fence of thorns stands he will reside for a yuga in the abode of Śrī Brahmā, along with three generations of his ancestors. And, O best of the descendants of Manu! One who makes a wall to protect Tulasī will attain the same form as Śrī Viṣṇu, along with three generations of his ancestors.

¹⁷ One kalpa (1000 yugas) is a day of Brahmā (about 4.3 trillion years).

In the episode about King Yajñadhvaja narrated in the Brhan-Nāradiya-Purāṇa, it is described the following:

*durlabhā tulasī-sevā durlabhā saṅgatiḥ satām
durlabhā hari-bhaktiś ca saṁsārārṇava-pātinām*

For a person who has fallen in the ocean of material existence, it is very difficult to obtain service to Tulasī, *bhakti* to Śrī Hari and association of saintly people.

It is said in another Purāṇa:

*yat phalaṁ kratubhiḥ sviṣṭaiḥ samāpta-vara-dakṣiṇaiḥ
tat phalaṁ koti-guṇitaṁ ropayitvā hareḥ priyām*

By planting Tulasī, one achieves one hundred lakh times more benefit than that which is obtained by completing a well-performed *yajña* accompanied by finest of *dakṣiṇās*.

*tulasīm ye prayacchanti surāṇām arcanāya vai
ropayanti śucau deśe teṣāṁ loko 'kṣayaḥ smṛtaḥ*

One who plants a Tulasī in a clean place in honor of gods achieves the undecaying abode of the Supreme Person.

*ropitām tulasīm dṛṣtvā nareṇa bhūmi bhūmipa
vivarna-vadano bhūtvā tal-lipiṁ mārjayed yamaḥ*

O King! O protector of the Earth! By seeing someone who has planted a Tulasī, Śrī Yama turns pale and then destroys all records of that person's sins.

*tulasī-nicayo brūyāt trikālam vadane yadi
nityam sa go-sahasrasya phalam āpnoti bhūsura*

O God on the Earth! If someone utters "Tulasī" three times a day – morning, noon, and evening – he attains the benefit of donating a thousand Go.

*tena dattaṁ hutam japtam kṛtam śrāddham gayā-śire
tapas taptam khaga-śreṣṭha tulasī yena ropitā*

O best of birds! If a person has planted Tulasi, then all his charity, *japa*, *yajna*, performance of *śrāddha* in Gayā and austerities will become successful.

*śrutābhilaṣitā dr̥ṣṭā ropitā siñcitā natā
tulasī dahate pāpam yugāntāgnir ivākhilam*

Just as the fire at the end of a *kalpa* destroys everything, in the same way Tulasi burns all the sins of those who hear about her, desire to serve her, see and water her, and offer obeisance unto her.

*keśavāyatane yas tu kārayet tulasī-vanam
labhate cākṣayam sthānam pitrbhiḥ saha vaiṣṇavāḥ*

A Vaiṣṇava who establishes a Tulasi forest in the temple of Śrī Keśava will attain His eternal abode along with his Vaiṣṇava forefathers.

Elsewhere it is said:

*tulasī-kānane śrāddham pitṛnām kurute ca yaḥ
gayā-śrāddham kṛtam tena viṣṇunā bhāṣitam purā*

It has been declared by Śrī Viṣṇu Himself that performing *śrāddha* in a Tulasi forest is as good as doing it in Gayā.

*tulasī-gahanam dr̥ṣṭvā vimukto yāti pātakāt
sarvathā muni-śārdūla brahma-hā punya-bhāg bhavet*

By having *darśana* of a Tulasi forest, a person gets liberated from the hell such as *pātaka*. O foremost among the *munis*! Even a killer of a *brāhmaṇa* becomes endowed with auspicious merit.

From the dialogue between the Sage Vasiṣṭha and King Māndhātā in the Skanda-Purāṇa we learn:

*sukla-pakṣe yadā rājan tṛtīyā budha-samyutā
śravaṇena mahā-bhāga tulasī yāti punya-dā*

O king! O fortunate one! One derives auspicious benefits by worshipping Tulasī on a Wednesday that falls on the third lunar day of the bright fortnight and the star is Śra-
vanā.

The glories of mud, twigs and other aspects of Tulasī

It is mentioned in the conversation between Śrī Brahmā and Śrī Nārada in the Skanda-Purāṇa:

*bhū-gatais tulasī-mūlair mṛttikā sparṣitā tu yā
tīrtha-koṭi-samā jñeyā dhāryyā yatnena sā grhe*

The soil touched by the roots of Tulasī is as pure as a crore places of pilgrimage. All efforts must therefore be made to preserve her in one's house.

*yasmin grhe dvija-śreṣṭha tulasī-mūla-mṛttikā
sarvadā tiṣṭhate dehe devatā na sa mānavaḥ*

O best of the twice-born! A person in whose house the mud surrounding the roots of Tulasī is always present is a god, not a human being.

*tulasī-mṛttikā-lipto yadi prāṇān parityajet
yamena nekṣitum śakto yukta-pāpa-śatair api*

At the time of death, if a person who is tainted with hundreds of sins is anointed with the mud of Tulasī, Śrī Yama will not be able to examine him.

*śirasi kriyate yais tu tulasī-mūla-mṛttikā
vighnāni tasya naśyanti sānukūlā grahās tathā*

For him who applies the Tulasī mud on his forehead all obstacles and difficulties are destroyed and all the planets become auspicious for him.

*tulasī-mṛttikā yatra kāṣṭhaṁ patraṁ ca veśmani
tiṣṭhate muni-śārdūla niṣcalaṁ vaiṣṇavaṁ padam*

O best amongst the thinkers! That person whose house has the mud, twigs and leaves of Tulasi resides eternally in the abode of Śrī Viṣṇu.

It is also written elsewhere:

*maṅgalārthaṁ ca doṣa-ghnaṁ pavitrārthaṁ dvijottama
tulasī-mūla-samlagnāṁ mṛttikāṁ āvahed budhaḥ*

O best of the twice born! To destroy all of his defects, to attain auspicious results and to purify himself, a wise person should take shelter of the mud of Tulasi.

*tan-mūla-mṛttikāṁ yo vai kārāyisyati mastake
tasya tuṣṭo varān kāmān pradadāti janārdanaḥ*

Śrī Janārdana (Kṛṣṇa) is pleased with those who apply Tulasi mud on their foreheads, and fulfills their desires by granting them (all) the boons.

It is described in the Bṛhan-Nāradya-Purāṇa:

*tulasī-mūla-sambhūtā hari-bhakti-padodbhavā
gaṅgodbhavā ca mṛl-lekhā nayaty acyuta-rūpatām*

The soil from the base of Tulasi, the dust from the feet of Vaiṣṇavas and the mud from the Gaṅgā are pure; he who applies his tilaka with these becomes very dear to Śrī Acyuta (Viṣṇu).

It is described in the Garuḍa-Purāṇa:

*yad-grhe tulasī-kāṣṭhaṁ patraṁ śuṣkaṁ athādrakam
bhavate naiva pāpaṁ tad-grhe saṁkramate kalau*

In the age of Kali, sin does not enter the house where the leaves and twigs of Tulasi – either fresh or dry – are kept.

It is described in both Viṣṇu-Dharmottara and Śrī-Prahlāda-Saṁhitā:

*patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ kāṣṭhaṁ tvak-śākhā-pallavāṅkuram
tulasī-sambhavaṁ mūlaṁ pāvanaṁ mṛttikādy api*

The leaves, flowers, fruits, twigs, bark, branches, tender sprouts, roots and the mud of Tulasī are very pure.

*homaṁ kurvanti ye viprās tulasī-kāṣṭha-vahninā
lave lave bhavet punyam agniṣṭoma-śatodbhavam*

The priests who perform a *homa* with a fire from the wood of Tulasī obtain pious merit equivalent to that gained by a hundred *agniṣṭoma-yajñas* at every moment.

*naivedyaṁ pacate yas tu tulasī-kāṣṭha-vahninā
meru-tulyaṁ bhaved annaṁ tad dattaṁ keśavāya hi*

The food offering to Śrī Keśava (Viṣṇu) which is prepared on the fire made with the wood of Tulasī is equivalent to an offering of the size of the Meru mountain.

*śarīraṁ dahyate yeśāṁ tulasī-kāṣṭha-vahninā
na teṣāṁ punar-āvṛttir viṣṇu-lokāt kathaṅcana*

One whose dead body is burned with the fire made from the wood of Tulasī will never return to this world from the planet of Śrī Viṣṇu.

*grasto yadi mahā-pāpair agamyāgamanādikaiḥ
mṛtaḥ śuddhyati dāhena tulasī-kāṣṭha-vahninā*

Even the person who has committed the gravest of sins, such as illicit intercourse with a woman, will become completely purified if his *antima-saṁskāra*¹⁸ is performed with Tulasī wood.

¹⁸ *Antima-saṁskāra* refers to the rituals performed for a person by his descendants and/or qualified priests after his death. They are done to ensure that person's smooth passage to his next form of existence.

*tirtham yadi na samprāptam smṛtir vā kīrttanam hareḥ
tulasī-kāṣṭha-dagdhasya mṛtasya na punar bhavaḥ*

Even if in his lifetime a person was unable to undertake a pilgrimage, remember Śrī Hari or perform His *kīrtana*, he is liberated from rebirth if his *antima-saṁskāra* is done with Tulasī wood.

*yady ekaṁ tulasī-kāṣṭham madhye kāṣṭha-cayasya hi
dāha-kāle bhaven muktiḥ pāpa-koṭi-yutasya ca*

During the *antima-saṁskāra*, if one Tulasī twig is present among the wood used then even a person with a *crore* sins attains liberation.

*janma-koṭi-sahasrais tu toṣito yaḥ janārdanaḥ
dahyante te janā loke tulasī-kāṣṭha-vahninā*

However, the *antima-saṁskāra* only of those who have pleased Śrī Janārdana by observing Śrī Janmāṣṭamī in a thousand *crore* lifetimes is done with fire from Tulasī wood.

It is said in the Agastya-Saṁhitā:

*yaḥ kuryāt tulasī-kāṣṭhair akṣa-mālām surūpiṇīm
kaṇṭha-mālām ca yatnena kṛtam tasyākṣayaṁ bhavet*

One who makes his neatly carved *japa* beads as well as neck beads with the wood of Tulasī and uses them, attains pious merit that is never lost.

The glories of wearing the leaves of Tulasī

It is mentioned in the conversation between Śrī Brahmā and Śrī Nārada in the Skanda-Purāṇa:

*yasya nābhi-sthitam patram mukhe śirasi karṇayoḥ
tulasī-sambhavam nityam tīrthais tasya makhais ca kim*

For one who wears the leaves of Tulasī offered to Śrī Bhagavān on the mouth, head, navel or ears, where is the need for him to go on a pilgrimage, or perform *yajñas*?

It is described elsewhere:

*śatru-ghnam ca supunyaṁ ca śrī-karam roga-nāśanam
kṛtvā dharmam avāpnoti śirasā tulasī-dalam
yaḥ kaścid vaiṣṇavo loke mithyācāro 'py anāśramī
punāti sakalāṁ lokān śirasā tulasīm vahan*

A leaf of Tulasī destroys one's enemies and diseases as well as awards one wealth and great pious merit. By placing it on one's head, one achieves the fruits of all *dharma*. Indeed, by this act even a person pretending to be a Vaiṣṇava and not following *varṇāśrama* purifies all the worlds.

It is mentioned in the conversation between Śrī Yama and Bhagīratha in the Brhan-Nāradiya-Purāṇa:

*karṇena dhārayed yas tu tulasīm satataṁ narah
tat-kāṣṭhaṁ vāpi rājendra tasya nāsty upapātakam*

He who always bears a leaf or a stalk of Tulasī behind his ears can never become tainted by a minor offence such as forgetting the Veda or breaking a vow of chastity.

The Yamadūtas tell a learned Vaiṣṇava in the Hari-Bhakti-Sudhodaya:

*kasmād iti na jānīmas tulasyā hi priyo hariḥ
gacchantam tulasī-hastam rakṣann evānugacchati*

We know very well how dear Tulasī is to Śrī Hari because He personally follows the person who carries Tulasī in his hand, in order to protect him.

In another Purāṇa, it is said:

*yaḥ kṛtvā tulasī-patram śirasā viṣṇu-tatparaḥ
karoti dharma-kāryāṇi phalam āpnoti cākṣayam*

A sincere devotee of Śrī Viṣṇu knows that Tulasī is very dear to Him, so to please Him he carries her leaves on his head. He performs thus *dhārmic* activities, gaining inexhaustible pious merit from them.

The glories of eating a leaf of Tulasī

It is said in the Garuḍa-Purāṇa:

*mukhe tu tulasī-patraṁ dr̥ṣṭvā śirasi karnayoh
kurute bhāskaris tasya duṣkṛtasya tu mārjanam
trikālaṁ vinatā-putra prāśayet tulasīm yadi
viśiṣyate kāya-śuddhis cāndrāyaṇa-śataṁ vinā*

Śrī Yama pardons the sins of the person who adorns his face, head or ears with the leaves of Tulasī. O son of Vinatā! The body of one who partakes of the leaves of Tulasī three times a day (morning, noon and evening) is completely purified. Indeed, such purification may not be obtainable even by performing one hundred cāndrāyaṇa vratas.

It is mentioned in the conversation between Śrī Vasiṣṭha and Śrī Māndhātā in the Skanda-Purāṇa:

*cāndrāyaṇāt tapta-kṛcchrād brahma-kūrccāt kuṣodakāt
viśiṣyate kāya-śuddhis tulasī-patra-bhakṣaṇāt*

By eating the leaves of Tulasī, one's body achieves greater level of purification than that obtained by performing the cāndrāyaṇa, the kṛcchra, the kuṣodaka and the brahma-kūrcca vratas¹⁹.

*tathā ca tulasī-patra-bhakṣaṇād bhāva-varjitah
pāpo 'pi sad-gatiṁ prāpta ity etad api viśrutam*

It is also known that a person who is devoid of bhakti and is a sinner, attains the path of righteousness by consuming a leaf of Tulasī.

¹⁹ These are different severe penances that are performed to nullify the effects of sinful actions, or to obtain material results.

In the Skanda-Purāṇa, it is said in the conversation between Śrī Brahmā and Śrī Nārada:

*kṣīrābdhau mathyamāne hi tulasī kāma-rūpiṇī
utpādītā mahā-bhāgā lokoddhāraṇa-hetave*

Tulasī, who can assume any shape at will and is highly fortunate, was born during the churning of the ocean of milk for the welfare and advancement of this world.

*yasyāḥ smaraṇa-mātreṇa darśanāt kīrttaṇād api
vilayaṁ yānti pāpāni kiṁ punar viṣṇu-pūjanāt*

By remembering, praising and having darśana of her, all sins get destroyed. How much more, then, are they destroyed if her leaf is used in the worship of Śrī Viṣṇu Himself?

*jāta-rūpa-mayaṁ puṣpaṁ padma-rāga-mayaṁ śubham
hitvā tu ratna-jātāni grhṇāti tulasī-dalam*

He will pay attention neither to a golden flower, nor to the beauty of a ruby, nor to other kinds of gems. Instead, He will choose a Tulasī leaf.

*bhakṣitam lubdhakenāpi patraṁ tulasī-sambhavam
paścād diṣṭāntam āpanno bhasmībhūtam kalevaram*

Even a hunter who ate the leaves of Tulasī burned all his sins to ashes upon his death.

*sītāsitaṁ yathā nīraṁ sarva-pāpa-kṣayāvaham
tathā ca tulasī-patraṁ prāṣitaṁ sarva-kāma-dam
yathā jāta-valo vahnir dahate kānanādikam
prāṣitaṁ tulasī-patraṁ tathā dahati pātakam*

Just as the waters of the Gaṅgā and Yamunā wash away all sins, or a forest fire burns to ashes the entire forest, in the same way eating a Tulasī leaf fulfills all one's desires and burns all of one's sins.

*yathā bhakti-rato nityam naro dahati pātakam
tulasī-bhakṣanān muñcet śrutam etat purā hareḥ*

Just as a person constantly engaged in *bhakti* burns all his sins to ashes, eating a leaf of Tulasi produces the same effect. Indeed, this has been heard from Śrī Hari Himself.

*tāvat tiṣṭhanti pāpāni dehinām yama-kinkarāḥ
yāvan na tulasī-patram mukhe śirasi tiṣṭhati*

O servants of Śrī Yama! Sins reside in a sinful person only as long as the leaves of Tulasi are not present either in his mouth or on his forehead.

*amṛtād utthitā dhātrī tulasī viṣṇu-vallabhā
smṛtā saṅkīrtitā dhyātā prāsītā sarva-kāma-dā*

Mother Tulasi, who is the consort of Śrī Viṣṇu, has originated from nectar. Therefore, by remembering, praising, contemplating upon, and eating her leaves, she fulfills all of one's desires.

In the same vein, Śrī Viṣṇu tells Śrī Yama:

*dhātrī-phalaṅ ca tulasī mṛtyu-kāle bhaved yadi
mukhe yasya śire dehe durgatir nāsti tasya vai*

No misfortune befalls him whose mouth, forehead or body come in contact with the *āmlā* fruit or Tulasi at the time of his death.

*yukto yadi mahā-pāpaiḥ sukṛtaṁ nārjitaṁ kvacit
tathāpi dīyate mokṣas tulasī bhakṣitā yadi*

Even one who has committed grave sins and has no pious merit is liberated by eating Tulasi.

*lubdhakenātma-dehena bhakṣitaṁ tulasī-dalam
saṁprāpto mat-padam nūnam kṛtvā prāṇasya saṅkṣayam*

The hunter who ate a Tulasi leaf attained My abode on leaving his body.

In another Purāṇa, it is said:

*upoṣya dvādaśīm śuddhām pārane tulasī-dalam
prāśayed yadi viprendra aśvamedhāṣṭakam labhet*

O best among learned persons! After observing Śuddha-Ekādaśī, if a person consumes a Tulasī leaf he obtains the benefits equivalent to eight aśvamedha-yajñas.

*tathaiva tulasī-sparsāt kṛṣṇa-cakreṇa rakṣitah
brahma-bandhur iti khyāto hari-bhakti-sudhodayah*

It is described in the Hari-Bhakti-Sudhodaya that owing to the touch of Tulasī, the Sudarśana Cakra protected Brahma Bandhu.

It is therefore said:

*kim citram asyāḥ patitaṁ tulasyā
dalam jalam vā patitaṁ punite
lagnādhi-bhāla-sthalaṁ ālavāla-
mrtsnāpi kṛtsnāgha-vināśanāya*

A Tulasī leaf purifies everyone. Therefore, of what surprise is it that the mud of such Tulasī destroys all of one's sins?

*śrīmat-tulasyāḥ patrasya mātmyam yady apīdṛṣam
tathāpi vaiṣṇavaḥ tat na grāhyam kṛṣṇārpanam vinā*

Even if the glories of Tulasī are described thus, Vaiṣṇavas should not accept her (for consumption or for placing on the head) without first offering her to Śrī Viṣṇu.

*kṛṣṇa-priyatvāt sarvatra śrī-tulasyāḥ prasāngataḥ
saṅkīrttyamānam dhātṛyās ca mātmyam likhyate 'dhunā*

Because she is very dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Tulasī is glorified in all the places. Now we will describe the glories of the āmlā tree.

In the conversation between Śrī Brahmā and Śrī Nārada in the Skanda-Purāṇa, the glories of the āmlā tree are described as follows:

*dhātrī-cchāyām samāśritya yo 'rcchayec cakrapāṇinam
puspe puspe 'śvamedhasya phalaṁ prāpnoti mānavah*

If a person worships Śrī Cakrapāṇī in the shade of the āmlā tree, he receives the benefits of the aśvamedha-yāga with every flower that he offers.

Appendix B

The Importance of Offering Food to Śrī Viṣṇu

It is said in the Viṣṇu-Dharmottara:

*kathañcid api nāśnīyād akṛtvā kṛṣṇa-pūjanam
na cāsamarpya govinde kiñcid bhuñjīta vaiṣṇavaḥ*

A Vaiṣṇava will not eat anything before worshipping Kṛṣṇa and offering food to Him.

*eka-kālam dvi-kālam vā tri-kālam pūjayed dharim
apūjya bhojanam kurvan narakāni vrajen narah*

One must worship one's iṣṭa-devatā once, twice or thrice a day. He who has his food before worshipping his iṣṭa is surely bound to go to hell.

*yo mohād athavālasyaḥ akṛtvā devatārcaṇam
bhuñkte sa yāti narakam śūkareṣv iha jāyate*

He who takes his food before performing arcaṇā of his deva, owing to delusion or laziness, goes to hell and takes birth among the pigs here in this world.

*prātar-mādhyan-dinaṁ sāyam viṣṇu-pūjā smṛtā budhaiḥ
aśakto vistareṇaiva prātaḥ sampūjya keśavam*

Intelligent persons have recommended worship of Keśava (Śrī Viṣṇu) three times a day – in the morning, in the afternoon and in the evening. He who is unable to do so must perform it at least once elaborately in the morning.

sambhojya bhojanam kuryād anyathā narakam vrajet

Only after offering food to his iṣṭa-deva can he honor it himself, else he goes to hell.

It is said in the Hayaśīrṣa-Pañcarātra:

*na tv evāpūjya bhuñjīta bhagavantam janārdanam
na tat svayam samaśnīyād yad viṣṇo na nivedayet*

Without worshiping and offering food to Śrī Viṣṇu, one should not have one's food.

It is said in the Brahmāṇḍa-Purāṇa:

*patram puṣpam phalam toyam anna-pānādyam auśadham
anivedya na bhuñjīta yad āhārāya kalpitam*

A devotee must offer his iṣṭa whatever he has prepared for his own consumption, including fruits, flowers, leaves, herbs, water, rice grains, drinks and accompanying items, and only then honor them.

*anivedya tu bhuñjānaḥ prāyaścittī bhaven naraḥ
tasmāt sarvaṁ nivedyaiva viṣṇau bhuñjīta sarvadā*

He who takes his food without offering it to Śrī Viṣṇu is obliged to perform atonement. Hence, food should first be offered and only then consumed.

*anivedya tu yo bhuñkte haraye paramātmāne
majjanti pitaras tasya narake śāśvatīḥ samāḥ*

The forefathers of one who violates this and takes food without offering it to Śrī Hari (the Paramātmā) reside in hell for eternity.

*ambarīṣa navam vastram phalam annam rasādikam
kṛtvā viṣṇupabhuktaṁ tu sadā sevyam hi vaiṣṇavaiḥ*

O Ambarīṣa! New clothes and food items such as fruits, flowers, grains, juice and other accompanying dishes are accepted by Vaiṣṇavas only after these have been offered to Śrī Viṣṇu.

*gandhāṇṇa-vara-bhakṣyāṁś ca srajo vāsāṁsi bhūṣaṇam
dattvā tu deva-devāya tac-cheṣāṇy upabhuñjate*

Sandalwood paste, eatables, exquisite food, garlands, ornaments or clothes must be accepted only after they have been offered to Śrī Viṣṇu.

Appendix C

Prayers to Various Deities

Meditation on Śrī Viṣṇu:

*om dhyeyah sadā savitr-maṇḍala-madhya-vartti nārāyaṇah
sarasijāsana-sanniviṣṭah keyūravān kanaka-kuṇḍalavān kirīti
hārī hiraṇmaya-vapur dhṛta-śaṅkha-cakrah*

Om. Nārāyaṇa is always to be meditated on. He is situated in the Sun, seated on a lotus, and is wearing arm bracelets, golden earrings, a diadem and a pearl necklace. He has a golden body and is holding a conch and a wheel.

While offering obeisances to Śrī Viṣṇu:

*om namo brahmaṇya-devāya go-brāhmaṇa-hitāya ca
jagad-dhitāya kṛṣṇāya govindāya namo namaḥ
pāpo 'ham pāpa-karmāham pāpātmā pāpa-sambhavaḥ
trāhi mām puṇḍarikākṣa sarva-pāpa-haro hariḥ*

Om. Obeisance to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the keeper of Go (Govinda). He is the God of the *brāhmaṇas* and cares for the welfare of the Go, the *brāhmaṇas*, and the whole world.

I am a sinner, my actions are sinful, my nature is sinful, and I am born of sin. O Lotus-Eyed One (Puṇḍarikākṣa), You are Hari, the One Who takes away all of one's sins. Please protect me.

Meditation on Śrī Sūrya:

*om raktāmbujāsanam aśeṣa-guṇaika-sindhum bhānum
samasta-jagatām adhipam bhajāmi padma-dvayābhaya-varān
dadhatam karābjair māṇikya-maulim
arūṇy-aṅga-ruciṁ tri-netram*

Om. I adore Bhānu (the Sun), Who is the ruler of all worlds, is the ocean of unlimited good qualities and is seated on a red lotus. He has three eyes, a resplendent reddish body, wears a crown studded with rubies, and bestows with His lotus hands blessings in form of a pair of lotuses and fearlessness.

While offering obeisances to Śrī Sūrya:

*javā-kusuma-saṅkāśam tārāgraha-vimardakam
dhvāntāriṁ sarva-pāpa-ghnam pranato 'smi divākaram*

I pay obeisance to Śrī Sūrya, Who creates the days (Divākara), is the enemy of darkness (Dhvāntāri), and eclipses stars and planets: He is similar to the saffron flower (javā-kusuma) and destroys all sins.

Offering arghya to Śrī Sūrya: *idam arghyam śrī-sūryāya namaḥ*

*namo vivasvate brahman bhāsvate viṣṇu-tejase
jagat-savitre śucaye savitre karma-dāyine
namo bhagavate tubhyaṁ namaste jāta-vedase
dattam arghyam mayā bhāno tvaṁ grhāna namo 'stu te*

O Supreme Truth (Brahman)! Obeisance to You. You are brilliant (Vivasvat), luminous (Bhāsvat), effulgent as Viṣṇu (Viṣṇutejas), stimulator and animator of the world (Jagat-savitṛ, Savitṛ), pure (Śuci), and the One who awards the fruits of all actions (Karmadāyī).

O bright personality (Bhānu)! Obeisance to You Who are divine (Bhagavat). You know and are known by all created beings (Jātavedas). Please accept my offering of water.

Meditation on Śrī Gaṇapati (Gaṇeśa):

*om kharvaṃ sthūla-tanuṃ gajendra-vadanam lambodaram
sundaram prasyandan-mada-gandha-lubdha-madhupa-
vyālola-gaṇḍa-sthalaṃ dantāghāta-vidāritāri-rudhiraiḥ
sindūra-śobhākaram vande śaila-sutā-sutam gaṇa-patim
siddhi-prada-karmasu*

Om. I bow down to Him Who is beautiful, has a fat body, a large belly (Lambodara), the face of an elephant (Gajendra-vadana), and is dwarfish in appearance. His cheeks are swarmed by bees rollicking to and fro, intoxicated by the smell of the liquid emanating from his forehead during rut. He is Gaṇapati, the master of the troops of demigods (gaṇas) and the son of Pārvatī, the daughter of Himālaya. He gives perfection to one's actions, and His hands are beautified by the vermillion of the blood of His enemies who were torn apart by His tusks.

While offering obeisances to Śrī Gaṇapati:

*om ekadantaṃ mahā-kāyaṃ lambodaram gajānanam
vighna-nāśa-karam devaṃ herambam pranamāmy aham*

Om. I pay obeisances to Śrī Gaṇeśa, Who has one tusk (Ekadanta), a massive body (Mahākāya), a large belly (Lambodara) and the head of an elephant (Gajānana). He destroys all obstacles (Vighnanāśakara), is divine (Deva) and is also known as Heramba.

Meditation on Śrī Śiva (Maheśa):

*om dhyāyen nityaṃ maheśam rajata-giri-nibham cāru-
candrāvataṃsam ratna-kalpojjvalāṅgam paraśu-mṛga-
varābhīti-hastam prasannaṃ padmāsīnam samantāt
stutam amara-gaṇair vyāghra-kṛtti-vasānam
viśvādyam viśva-bijam nikhila-bhaya-haram
pañca-vaktram tri-netram*

Om. One should constantly meditate on the Great Lord (Maheśa), Who resembles a silvery mountain and Who bears a lovely moon at His crest. His body bears splendor like that of sparkling gems. Holding an axe and a deer in His hands, He grants with them the boon of fearlessness. Bright and tranquil, He is seated in the lotus position, and is praised on all sides by the groups of gods. He wears clothes made of tiger skin. He is the origin of the world, being its seed, and He destroys all fear. He has five heads and three eyes.

While offering obeisances to Śrī Śiva:

*om namas tubhyaṁ virūpākṣa namaste divya-caḥṣuṣe
namah pināka-hastāya vajra-hastāya vai namah*

Om. Obeisances to You Who have an odd number of eyes. Obeisances to You Who have divine vision. Obeisances to You Who hold the bow Pināka and a thunderbolt in Your hands.

Meditation on Śrī Durgā:

*om jaṭā-juṭa-samāyuktām arddhendukṛta-śekharam
locana-traya-samyuktām pūrṇendu-saḍṛśānanām
atāsi-puṣpa-varṇābhām supraṭiṣṭhām sulocanām
nava-yauvana-sampannām sarvābharāṇa-bhūṣitām
sucāru-daśanām tadvat pīnonnata-payodharām
tribhaṅga-rūpā-samsthānām mahiṣāsura-mardinīm
mr̥ṇālāyata-saṁsparśa-daśa-bāhu-samanvitām*

*triśūlam dakṣiṇe dhyeyam khaḍgam cakram kramād
adhah tikṣṇa-vānam tathā śaktim dakṣiṇeṣu vicintayet
khetakam pūrva-cāpaś ca pāśam ankuṣam eva ca
ghaṇṭām vā paraśum vāpi vāmataḥ sanniveśayet*

adhastān mahiṣam tadvad viśiraskam pradarśayet
śiraś-chedodbhavam tadvad dānavam khaṅga-pāṇinam
hrdi śūlena nirbhinnam niryad-antra-vibhūṣitam
raktā-rakti-kṛtāṅgaṁ ca rakta-visphuritekṣanam
veṣṭitam nāga-pāśena bhrū-kuṭi-bhīṣanānanam
sapāśa-vāma-hastena dhṛta-keśaṁ ca durgayā
vamad-rudhira-vaktraṁ ca devyāḥ simham pradarśayet
devyās tu dakṣiṇam pādāṁ samam simhoparisthitam
kiñcid ūrddhvaṁ tathā vāmam aṅguṣṭham mahiṣopari
stūyamānaṁ ca tad-rūpam amaraiḥ sanniveśayet
ugra-candā pracandā ca candogrā canda-nāyikā
candā candavatī caiva canda-rūpātī-candikā
astābhiḥ śaktibhiḥ tābhiḥ satatam pariveṣṭitām
cintayej jagatām dhātṛīm dharma-kāmārtha-mokṣadām

Om. One should meditate on Śrī Durgā Whose hair is twisted (like that of ascetics) and Who bears the half-moon on Her head. She has three eyes and Her face resembles the full moon.

She shines with the colour of *atāsī* flowers, stands firm, has beautiful eyes, is endowed with fresh youth and embellished with all kinds of ornaments.

She has beautiful teeth as well as round raised breasts, and Her figure bends in three places. She destroyed the demon Mahiṣa. She is endowed with ten arms that are soft like a stem of a lotus.

In Her right hands, She holds a trident, and gradually moving downward, a sword, a wheel, a sharp arrow and a dart. In Her left hands, She holds a shield, a bow, a noose with an elephant goad, a bell and an axe. One should meditate upon Her in this form.

Below Her, one should envision the buffalo-headed demon Mahiṣāsura, with his head severed and with a sword in his hand. His heart is pierced by the trident and he is adorned with the intestines coming out of his abdomen. His body is bathed in blood, his eyes are blood-red, and his frowning face is terrifying. Encircled by a snake noose, Durgā is grasping him by the hair with Her left hand that also holds a noose.

One should visualize the Goddess' lion with blood pouring out of his mouth. The Goddess' right foot is evenly placed on the lion and is slightly above Her left foot, the great toe of which is placed on Mahiṣāsura. This form which is praised by immortal gods is to be meditated on.

She is surrounded by eight expansions of Herself known as Ugracandā, Pracandā, Candogra, Caṇḍanāyikā, Caṇḍā, Caṇḍavatī, Caṇḍarūpā and Aticandikā. One should meditate on the Mother of all worlds Who bestows the four human goals: *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, and *mokṣa*.

While offering obeisances to Śrī Durgā:

*yā devī sarva-bhūteṣu śānti-rūpeṇa saṁsthītā
namas tasyai namas tasyai namas tasyai namo namaḥ*

*yā devī sarva-bhūteṣu mātṛ-rūpeṇa saṁsthītā
namas tasyai namas tasyai namas tasyai namo namaḥ*

Obeisances to the Goddess, obeisances to the Goddess, obeisances to the Goddess, Who is situated in all the living beings in form of peace and happiness.

Obeisances to the Goddess, obeisances to the Goddess, obeisances to the Goddess, Who is situated in all the living beings in form of a mother.

Durgā-Śata-Nāma-Stotram

īśvara uvāca -

śata-nāma pravakśyāmi śṛṇuṣva kamalānane
yasya prasāda-mātrena durgā prītā bhavet satī || 1 ||

om satī sādhi bhava-prītā bhavānī bhava-mocanī
āryā durgā jayā ādyā tri-netrā śūla-dhāriṇī || 2 ||

pināka-dhāriṇī citrā caṇḍa-ghaṇṭā mahā-tapāh
mano buddhir ahaṅkāra citta-rūpā citā citih || 3 ||

sarva-mantramayī sattā satyānanda-svarūpiṇī
anantā bhāvinī bhāvyā bhavyā 'bhavyā sadāgatiḥ || 4 ||

śāmbhavī deva-mātā ca cintā ratna-priyā sadā
sarva-vidyā dakṣa-kanyā dakṣa-yajña-vināśinī || 5 ||

aparnāneka-varṇā ca pāṭalā pāṭalāvati
pattāmbara-parīdhānā kalamāñjīra-rañjinī || 6 ||

ameyā vikramā krūrā sundarī sura-sundarī
vana-durgā ca mātangi mātaṅga-muni-pūjitā || 7 ||

brāhmī māheśvarī caindrī kaumārī vaiṣṇavī tathā
cāmuṇḍā caiva vārāhī lakṣmīś ca puruṣākṛtiḥ || 8 ||

vimalotkarṣiṇī jñānā kriyā satyā ca buddhi-dā
bahulā bahula-premā sarva-vāhana-vāhanā || 9 ||

niśumbha-śumbha-śamanī mahiṣāsura-mardinī
madhu-kaiṭabha-hantrī ca caṇḍa-muṇḍa-vināśinī || 10 ||

sarvāsura-vināśā ca sarva-dānava-ghātini
sarva-śāstramayī satyā sarvāstra-dhāriṇī tathā || 11 ||

aneka-śastra-hastā ca anekāstrasya dhāriṇī
kumārī caika-kanyā ca kaiśorī yuvatī yatih || 12 ||

*apraudhā caiva praudhā ca vṛddha-mātā bala-pradā
mahodarī mukta-keśī ghora-rūpā mahā-phalā || 13 ||*

agni-jvālā raudra-mukhī kālā-rātris tapasvinī || 14 ||

nārāyaṇī bhadra-kālī viṣṇu-māyā jalodarī || 15 ||

*śiva-dūtī karalī ca anantā parameśvarī
kātyāyaṇī ca sāvitṛī pratyakṣā brahma-vādinī || 16 ||*

*ya idam prapaṭhen nityam durgā-nāma-śatāṣṭakam
nāsādhyam vidyate devi triṣu lokeṣu pārvati || 17 ||*

*dhana-dhānyam sutam chāyām hayam hastinam eva ca
catur-aṅgam tathā cānte labhen muktiṁ ca śāśvatim || 18 ||*

*kumārīm pūjayitvā tu dhyātvā devīm sureśvarīm
pūjayet parayā bhaktyā paṭhan nāma-śatāṣṭakam || 19 ||*

*tasya siddhir bhaved devi sarvais suravarair api
rājāṇo dāsatām yānti rājya-śriyam avāpnuyāt || 20 ||*

*gorocanālaktaka-kunkumena sindūra-karpūra-madhu-trayena
vilikhya yantram vidhinā vidhi-jño bhavet sadā
dhārayate purāriḥ || 21 ||*

*bhaumā-vāsyā niśā-bhāge candre śata-bhiṣām gate
vilikhya prapaṭhet stotram sambhavet sampadām padam || 22 ||*

The Hundred (and Eight) Names of Śrī Durgā

Īśvara said: O Lotus-faced one, please listen to my description of one hundred (and eight) names by whose mercy Durgā or Satī may be pleased. || 1 ||

Om. Satī (is a good and faithful wife), Sādhvī (is virtuous), Bhavapritā (is dear to Śiva), Bhavānī (belongs to/is wife of Śiva), Bhavamocanī (releases the living beings from wordly

existence), Āryā (is honourable), Durgā (is difficult to overcome, cross over), Jayā (is victorious), Ādyā (is the original, the beginning), Trinetṛā (has three eyes), Śūladhārinī (holds a spear). || 2 ||

Pinākadhārinī (holds Śiva's bow), Citṛā (is amazing, wonderful), Candaghantā (wears fierce bells), Mahātapāh (undergoes severe penances), Manah (is the personification of mind), Buddhiḥ (is the personification of intelligence), Ahaṅkāṛā (is the personification of egotism), Cītarūpā (is the embodiment of intellect), Citā (is the personification of death), Citiḥ (is the embodiment of thinking mind). || 3 ||

Sarvamantramayī (has the nature of the essence of all mantras), Sattā (is the embodiment of goodness and excellence), Satyānandasvarūpiṇī (has the nature of true eternal bliss), Anantā (is endless, infinite), Bhāvinī (is beautiful), Bhāvya (brings about the future), Bhavyā (is auspicious, pleasant), Abhavyā (is ugly), Sadāgatiḥ (is the source of everlasting happiness). || 4 ||

Śāmbhavī (is the wife of Śambhu, Śiva), Devamātā (is the mother of gods), Cintā (is the personification of thought), Ratnapriyā (loves and is loved by jewels), Sarvavidyā (has complete knowledge), Dakṣakanyā (is Dakṣa's daughter), Dakṣayajñavināśinī (destroys the sacrifice of Dakṣa). || 5 ||

Aparṇā (does not even have leaves for food during her religious austerities), Anekavarnā (has many complexions; belongs to several categories), Pāṭalā (is pale red in appearance), Pāṭalāvatī (wears a pale red attire), Paṭṭāmbaraparīdhānā (wears garments of silk), Kalamañjirarañjinī (wears melodious anklets). || 6 ||

Ameyā (is immeasurable), Vikramā (is heroic and courageous), Krūrā (is harsh), Sundarī (is beautiful), Surasundarī

(is beautiful among gods and goddesses), Vanadurgā (resides in the forest), Mātāṅgī, Mātāṅgamunipūjitā (is worshiped by Sage Mātāṅga). || 7 ||

Brāhmī (is the personification of *brahman*), Māheśvarī (belongs to Maheśvara, Śiva), Aindrī (is worshiped by Indra), Kaumārī (is childlike, youthful), Vaisnavī (is a potency of Viṣṇu), Cāmundā (is terrifying in form), Vārāhī (is a female energy of the boar form of Viṣṇu), Lakṣmī (is beautiful), Puruṣākṛtiḥ (has the form of a man). || 8 ||

Vimalotkarṣiṇī (increases purity), Jñānā (possesses perfect knowledge), Kriyā (is the personification of religious action), Nityā (is eternal), Buddhidā (grants good intelligence), Bahulā (is numerous in forms), Bahulapremā (possesses abundant affection), Sarvavāhanavāhanā (is the carrier of all efforts and endeavors). || 9 ||

Niśumbhaśumbhaśamanī (destroys Niśumbha and Śumbha), Mahiṣāsuramardinī (destroys Mahiṣāsura), Madhukaiṭabhahantrī (destroys Madhu and Kaiṭabha), Caṇḍamundavināśiṇī (destroys Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa). || 10 ||

Sarvāsuraavināśā (destroys all demons), Sarvadānavaghātinī (slays all demons), Sarvaśāstramayī (knows all scriptures, or is known by all scriptures), Satyā (is the Truth), Sarvāstradhāriṇī (holds all weapons). || 11 ||

Anekaśāstrahastā (has numerous hands holding weapons), Anekāstrasya Dhāriṇī (holds a variety of weapons), Kumārī (is a child, a maiden), Ekakanyā (is the only daughter of her father), Kaiśorī (is a young girl), Yuvatī (is a young woman), Yatiḥ (is an ascetic, saint). || 12 ||

Apraudhā (is juvenile), Praudhā (is mature), Vṛddhamātā (is a wise mother), Balapradā (gives strength), Mahodārī (has a

big stomach), Muktakeśī (has untied hair), Ghorarūpā (has a dreadful form), Mahāphala (grants rich rewards). || 13 ||

Agnijvālā (is the flame of fire), Raudramukhī (has a violent face like that of Rudra), Kālarātriḥ (is the night of destruction at the end of the world), Tapasvinī (is an ascetic). || 14 ||

Nārāyaṇī (is a potency of Śrī Nārāyaṇa), Bhadrakālī (is the personification of auspicious time), Viṣṇumāyā (is the illusory potency of Śrī Viṣṇu), Jalodarī (whose belly contains the essence of all life). || 15 ||

Śivadūtī (is a messenger of Śiva), Karālī (is dreadful), Anantā (is boundless), Paramēśvarī (is the supreme goddess), Kātyāyaṇī (is worshiped by Sage Kātyāyana), Sāvitrī (is a form of the gāyatrī-mantra), Pratyakṣā (is manifest), Brahmavādinī (is the expounder of the Veda). || 16 ||

O Devī, O Pārvatī, those who always recite aloud these one hundred and eight names of Durgā find nothing impossible in the three worlds. || 17 ||

They obtain wealth and grains, offspring, protection, horses and elephants, as well as four human goals culminating in eternal liberation. || 18 ||

O Devī, those who worship Kumārī and meditate on Devī and Sureśvarī, and who worship Her with intense devotion, reading these 108 names, will achieve *siddhi* which even gods do not possess, as well as opulences of a kingdom, with kings turning their servants. || 19-20 ||

Those who make a diagram (yantra) from these verses, following the proper prescription, with the yellow pigment known as *gorocanā*, a red lac, saffron, vermillion, camphor and honey, and wear it like a talisman, become knowledgeable in rituals (*vidhijñāh*). Viṣṇu always supports such a person. || 21 ||

Those who write and recite aloud these verses on the night of a Tuesday, when the moon enters the region of the star Śatabhiṣā, attain all possible riches. || 22 ||

Thus ends the recitation of The Hundred (and Eight) Names of Śrī Durgā as given in the Viśva-Sāra-Tantra.

Śrī-Śiva-Stotram

dhārāpo'gni-marud-vyoma-makheśendv-arka-mūrttaye
sarva-bhūtāntara-sthāya śaṅkarāya namo namaḥ || 1 ||

śruty-antaḥ-kṛta-vāsāya śrutaye śruta-janmane
atīndriyāya mahase śāśvatāya namo namaḥ || 2 ||

sthūla-sūkṣma-vibhāgābhyām anirddeśyāya sambhave
bhavāya bhava-sambhūte duḥkha-hantre namo 'stu te || 3 ||

tarka-mārgādi-bhūtāya tapasām phala-dāyine
catur-varga-vadānyāya sarva-jñāya namo namaḥ || 4 ||

ādi-madhyānta-śūnyāya nirastāśeṣa-bhūta-
yogi-dhyeyāya mahate nirguṇāya namo namaḥ || 5 ||

viśvātmane 'vicintyāya vilasac-candra-maulaye
kandarpa-darpa-nāśāya kāla-hantre namo 'stu te || 6 ||

viśāśanāya viharad-vṛṣa-skandham upeyuṣe
sarid-dhāma-samābaddha-kapardāya namo namaḥ || 7 ||

śuddhāya śuddha-bhāvāya śuddha-nāmāntarātmane
purāntakāya pūrṇāya puṇya-nāmne namo namaḥ || 8 ||

tuṣṭāya nija-bhaktānām bhukti-mukti-pradāyine
vivāsase 'nivāsāya viśva-śāstre namo namaḥ || 9 ||

tri-mūrtter mūla-bhūtāya tri-netrāyādi-sambhave
tri-dhāmnām dhāma-rūpāya janma-ghnāya namo namaḥ || 10 ||

*devāsura-śiro-ratna-kiraṇārūṇitāṅghraye
kāntāya nija-kāntāyai dattārdhāya namo namah || 11 ||*

*stotreṇānena pūjāyām prīṇaye jagataḥ patim
bhukti-mukti-pradam bhaktyā sarvajñam parameśvaram || 12 ||*

*tasyāsādhyam tribhuvane na kiñcid api varttate
aihikam kiṁ phalam tatra muktir eva kare sthitā || 13 ||*

The Praises of Śrī Śiva

Obeisances to Śrī Śaṅkara, Who brings about peace, and Whose form includes the earth, water, fire, air, sky, the moon and the sun. You are the Lord of sacrifice (Makheśa) and are situated in all living beings. Obeisances unto You. || 1 ||

Obeisances to You, Who are eternal, glorious and beyond the senses. You are born with the knowledge of Śruti, You are Śruti personified, and You reside in Śruti. Obeisances unto You. || 2 ||

Obeisances to You, Who are benevolent, kind and grant happiness (Śambhu). It is impossible to distinctly classify You as either large or small, or gross or subtle (since You are all of these). You are the personification of well-being (Bhava), the origin of all existence and the destroyer of misery. Obeisances unto You. || 3 ||

Obeisances to You, the original Logician. You award the fruits of austerities, bountifully grant the four human goals (dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa) and are all-knowing. Obeisances unto You. || 4 ||

Obeisances to You, the Great One (Mahat), Whose beginning, middle or end is non-existent (as You are infinite) and

Who are completely fearless. You are beyond the three material modes of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* and are to be meditated on by the *yogīs*. Obeisances unto You. || 5 ||

Obeisances to You, the Soul of the universe (*Viśvātmā*), Who are inconceivable (*Avicintya*). You wear the glittering moon on Your head, shatter the pride of *Kandarpa*, the god of love, and destroy time. Obeisances unto You. || 6 ||

Obeisances to You, Who drank poison, Who are seated on the shoulders of Your roaming bull and Whose hair, being knotted in the form of a shell, is the abode of the river *Gaṅgā*. Obeisances unto You. || 7 ||

Obeisances to You, Who are pure (*Śuddha*), Whose feelings and thoughts are pure (*Śuddhabhāva*), Whose name is pure (*Śuddhanāman*) and Who dwells in the hearts of the living beings (*Antarātmā*). You destroyed (three) cities of the demons (*Pūrāntaka*), You are complete in Yourself (*Pūrṇa*), and Your name invokes auspiciousness (*Punya-nāman*). Obeisances unto You. || 8 ||

Obeisances to You. Pleased by Your devotees, You give them enjoyment as well as liberation, (while) You Yourself are naked and do not have a place of residence. You are the teacher of the entire universe (*Viśvaśāstr*). Obeisances unto You. || 9 ||

Obeisances to You, Who are the basis of the divine three-some (*Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva*), have three eyes (*Trinetra*), and are the origin of all welfare and happiness (*Ādiśambhu*). You are the Shelter of the three worlds and You destroy repeated birth. Obeisances unto You. || 10 ||

Obeisances to You, Whose feet are reddish by the splendor of the gems worn on the heads of *devas* and *asuras*. You

are such a loving husband that You have given half of Your form to Your beloved, Pārvatī. || 11 ||

Those who recite this hymn with devotion in their worship please the Supreme Lord Who awards both enjoyment and liberation, Who is all-knowing and the Master of the universe. Such a person will find nothing impossible to accomplish in the three worlds. Indeed, what of worth is a worldly fruit if even liberation is in his hand? || 12-13 ||

Thus ends the recitation of The Praises of Śrī Śiva.

Śrī-Viṣṇu-Stavaḥ

ādāya vedāḥ sakalāḥ samudrān
 nihatya śaṅkha-ripum atyudagram
 dattāḥ purā yena pitāmahāya viṣṇum
 tam ādim bhaja matsya-rūpam || 1 ||
 divyāmṛtārtham mathite mahābdher
 devāsurair vāsuki-mandarādyaiḥ
 bhūmer mahā-vega-vighūrṇitāyās
 tam kūrman ādhāra-gatam smarāmi || 2 ||

samudra-kānci sarid-uttariyā
 vasundharā meru-kirīta-bhārā
 dantāgrato yena samuddhatābhūt
 tam ādi-kolaṁ śaraṇam prapadye || 3 ||

bhaktārtti-bhaṅga-kṣamayā dhiyā
 yaḥ stambhāntarāntād uvito nṛsimhaḥ
 ripum surāṇām naśitair nakhāgrair
 vidārayan tam na ca vismarāmi || 4 ||

catuḥ-samudrābharaṇā dharitṛ
 nyāsāya nālaṁ caraṇasya yasya
 ekasya nānyasya padam surāṇām
 trivikramam sarva-gatam namāmi || 5 ||

triḥ-sapta-vāraṁ nṛpatīn nihatya
 yas tarpaṇaṁ rakta-mayaṁ pitṛbhyaḥ
 cakāra dor-daṇḍa-balena samyak
 tam ādi-sūraṁ pranamāmi viṣṇum || 6 ||

kule raghūṇāṁ samavāpya janma
 vidhāya setuṁ jaladher jalāntaḥ
 laṅkeśvaraṁ yaḥ śamayāṁcakāra
 sītāpatim tam pranamāmi bhaktyā || 7 ||

halena sarvān asurān nikṛṣya
 cakāra cūrṇaṁ muṣala-prahāraiḥ
 yaḥ kṛṣṇaṁ āsādya balaṁ balīyān
 bhaktyā bhaje tam balabhadra-rāmam || 8 ||

purā surāṇāṁ asurān vijetum
 sambhāvayaṁś cīvara-cihna-veśaṁ cakāra
 yaḥ śāstram amogha-kalpaṁ
 tam mūla-bhūtaṁ pranato'smi buddham || 9 ||

kalpāvasāne niśitaiḥ khurāgraiḥ
 saṅghaṭṭayāmāsa nimeṣa-mātrāt
 yas tejasā nirdahatāti-bhīmo
 viṣṇv-ātmakaṁ tam turagaṁ bhajāmaḥ || 10 ||

śaṅkhaṁ sucakraṁ sugadaṁ sarojaṁ
 dorbhir dadhānaṁ garuḍādhi-rūḍhaṁ
 śrīvatsa-cihnaṁ jagad-ādi-mūlaṁ
 tamāla-nīlaṁ hr̥di viṣṇum īde || 11 ||

kṣīrāmbudhau śeṣa-viśeṣa-talpe
 śayānam antaḥ-smita-śobhi-vaktraṁ
 utphulla-netrāmbujam ambudā-bham
 ādyaṁ śrutiṇāṁ asakṛt smarāmi || 12 ||

prīṇayed anayā stutyā
 jagan-nāthaṁ jaganmayam
 dharmārtha-kāma-mokṣāṇāṁ
 āptaye puruṣottamam || 13 ||

The Praises of Śrī Viṣṇu

I worship the original Viṣṇu, Who in His form of a fish (Matsya) killed the dreadful Śankhāsura hiding in the ocean, and restored thus all the stolen Vedas to Brahmā.
 || 1 ||

I meditate upon the Lord's form of a tortoise (Kūrma), Who gave shelter to Mother Earth (Bhūmī), who was agitated by the very rapid churning of the ocean, carried out by the *devas* and *asuras* with the help of Vāsuki and Mandara in order to obtain divine nectar. || 2 ||

I take refuge in the Lord, Who as the original boar (Ādikola) lifted on His tusks Mother Earth (Vasundharā), who wears the oceans as her girdle, the rivers as her upper garment and the mountain Meru as her crown. || 3 ||

I never forget the Lord, Who in His form as half-lion and half-man (Nṛsinha) appeared from within a column in order to relieve His devotee from distress and tore apart the enemy of the gods with the tips of His piercing nails.
 || 4 ||

I offer my obeisances to the Lord in his form of Trivikrama, Who penetrates everything. Mother Earth, who is adorned by the four oceans, was insufficient for placing just one of His feet and the entire abode of the gods was not sufficient for the other. || 5 ||

I offer my obeisances to Lord Viṣṇu, the original hero (Ādiśūra), Who with His punishing arm completely wiped out *kṣatriyas* twenty-one times, making thus a bloody offering to His forefathers. || 6 ||

With devotion, I offer my obeisances to the husband of Sītā (Sītāpati) Who, having taken birth in the dynasty of Raghus, and having conquered the ocean by building a bridge across it, destroyed the master of Laṅkā. || 7 ||

I adore with devotion the mighty Balabhadra-Rāma Whose strength almost equaled that of Kṛṣṇa, and Who dragged down all *asuras* with a plough, beating them to powder with His mace. || 8 ||

I offer my obeisances to Buddha, the Original Ascetic (Mūlabhūta), Who in the ancient times honored the rags of a monk and with a mind free from delusion created scriptures needed to subdue the demoniac among the learned *brāhmaṇas*. || 9 ||

We worship the formidable One endowed with burning effulgence, Who is non-different from Viṣṇu, and Who at the end of the *kalpa*, riding swiftly on His horse, destroys everything with its iron hooves in the blinking of an eye. || 10 ||

I extol in my heart Lord Viṣṇu, Whose complexion is as dark as that of a Tamāla tree, Who is the original basis of this world, Who wears the mark Śrīvatsa on His chest, Who is mounted on Garuḍa, and Who holds a lotus, a beautiful mace, a beautiful wheel and a conch in His hands. || 11 ||

I repeatedly remember Him, Who is the origin of the Vedas, Whose colour resembles that of a rain cloud, Whose eyes are like blossomed lotuses, Whose beautiful face is smiling inwardly, and Who lies down on the extraordinary bed of Śeṣa in the ocean of milk. || 12 ||

Those who please with these praises the greatest Person (Puruṣottama), Who is the Master of the world and Who contains the whole world, will obtain the four human goals of socio-religious duties (*dharma*), material possessions (*artha*), sense desires (*kāma*) and liberation (*mokṣa*).
 || 13 ||

Thus ends the recitation of The Praises of Śrī Viṣṇu.

Śrī-Sūrya-Kavacam

śrī sūrya uvāca

*śāmba śāmba mahā-bāho śṛṇu me kavacam śubham
 yaj jñātvā mantravit saṁnyak phalam āpnoti niścitam || 1 ||*

*yad dhṛtvā ca mahā-devo gaṇānām adhipo 'bhavat
 paṭhanād dhāraṇād viṣṇuḥ sarveśām pālakaḥ sadā
 evam indrādayaḥ sarve sarvaiśvaryam avāpnuyuḥ || 2 ||*

*kavacasya ṛṣir brahmā chando 'nuṣṭubh udāhṛtam
 śrī-sūryo devatā cātra sarva-deva-namaskṛtaḥ
 yaśa-ārogya-mokṣeṣu viniyogaḥ prakīrtitaḥ || 3 ||*

*praṇavo me śiraḥ pātu ghr̥ṇir me pātu bhālakam
 sūryo 'vyān nayana-dvandvam ādityaḥ karna-yugmakam || 4 ||*

*aṣṭākṣaro mahā-mantraḥ sarvābhīṣṭa-phala-pradaḥ
 hrīm̐ bījaṁ me mukhaṁ pātu hṛdayaṁ bhuvaneśvari
 candra-bījaṁ visargādhyam pātu me guhya-deśakam || 5 ||*

try-akṣaro 'sau mahā-mantraḥ sarva-tantreṣu gopitam || 6 ||

*śivo vahni-samāyukta-vāmākṣi-bindu-bhūṣitaḥ
 ekākṣaro mahā-mantraḥ śrī-sūryasya prakīrtitaḥ || 7 ||*

*guhyād guhyataro mantro vāñchā-cintā-manir mataḥ
 śīrṣādi-pāda-paryantam sadā pātu manūttamam || 8 ||*

iti te kathitaṁ divyaṁ triṣu lokeṣu durlabham
śrī-pradaṁ kāntidaṁ nityaṁ dhanārogya-vivardhanam || 9 ||

kuṣṭhādi-roga-śamanam mahā-vyādhi-vināśanam
tri-sandhyaṁ yaḥ paṭhen nityam arogi balavān bhavet || 10 ||

bahunā kim ihoktena yad yan manasi vartate
tat tat sarvaṁ bhavaty eva kavacasya dhāraṇāt || 11 ||

bhūta-preta-piśacāś ca yakṣa-gandharva-rākṣasāḥ
brahma-rākṣasa-vetālā naiva draṣṭum api kṣamāḥ
dūrād eva palāyante tasya saṅkīrttanād api || 12 ||

bhūrjja-patre samālikhya rocanāguru-kuṅkumaiḥ
ravi-vāre ca saṅkrāntyāṁ saptamyāṁ ca viśeṣataḥ
dhārayet sādḥaka-śreṣṭhas trailokya-vijayī bhavet || 13 ||

tri-loha-madhyagaṁ kṛtvā dhārayed dakṣiṇe bhuje
śikhāyāṁ athavā kaṇṭhe so 'pi sūryo na saṁśayaḥ || 14 ||

iti te kathitaṁ śāmba trailokya-maṅgalābhidham
kavacaṁ durlabhaṁ loke tava snehāt prakāśitam || 15 ||

ajñātvā kavacaṁ divyaṁ jayet sūrya-manūttamam
siddhir na jāyate tasya koṭi-kalpa-śatair api || 16 ||

The Kavaca of Śrī Sūrya

Śrī Sūrya said:

O Śāmba! O Śāmba! O mighty-armed one! Listen to my kavaca (auspicious protective shield), knowing which a person who is knowledgeable in mantras will surely be fully rewarded. || 1 ||

Wearing it, Mahādeva (Śiva) became commander of demigod troops. If recited and worn, Viṣṇu, Who always protects everybody, as well as Indra and others, all may obtain complete sovereignty. || 2 ||

The seer (*ṛṣi*) of this *kavaca* is said to be Brahmā, and its meter (*chandas*) is said to be *anustubh*. Its deity is Śrī Sūrya to Whom all the gods pay their obeisances. This *kavaca* is well-known for its use in obtaining fame, health and liberation. || 3 ||

May the sacred syllable *Om* protect my head, may light of the sun protect my forehead, may Sūrya protect my eyes and Āditya my ears. || 4 ||

The eight-syllable *mahāmantra* bestows the fruit of all one's desires. May the *bhuvaneśvarī-bija hrīm* protect my mouth and heart, and may the *candra-bīja*, endowed with the *visarga*, protect my private parts. || 5 ||

This three-syllable *mahāmantra* has been the secret of all Tantra. || 6 ||

The one-syllable *mahāmantra*, known to pertain to Śrī Sūrya, carries the letters indicated by the words Śiva, Fire, Left Eye and Dot.²⁰ || 7 ||

The supremely secret *mantra* is considered a touchstone that fulfills all desires. May this supreme spell protect me from head to foot. || 8 ||

I have narrated this divine *kavaca*, which is hard to obtain in the three worlds. It always gives good fortune and beauty as well as increases wealth and health. || 9 ||

It soothes diseases such as leprosy and destroys grave illnesses. He who always recites it at the times of sunrise, sunset and when the sun is at its zenith (*tri-sandhyā*) will become strong and free from disease. || 10 ||

²⁰ In the Tantra, in order to maintain the secrecy of *mantras*, their letters are often indicated by various words, whose hidden meaning is meant to be received only from a qualified guru.

What is the need of saying anything more here? All that one desires in the mind will certainly be accomplished by wearing and remembering this *kavaca*. || 11 ||

When this *kavaca* is recited, all the Bhūtas, Pretas, Piśācas, Yakṣas, Gandharvas, Rākṣasas, Brahṃa-rākṣasas and Vetālas flee from far, not even being able to face it. || 12 ||

If the best of the worshipers (*sādhaka-śreṣṭha*) writes this on a birch leaf with the yellow pigment known as *rocana*, saffron and aloe wood, and then wears it, particularly on a Sunday, on a day when the sun transits from one constellation to the next (*Sanṅkrānti*), or on the seventh day of a lunar cycle (*Saptamī*), he will vanquish the three worlds. || 13 ||

If he places it in a casing made of copper, brass or bell metal, and then wears it either on his right arm, his *śikhā* or his neck, he surely is Sūrya Himself. There is no doubt about it. || 14 ||

O Śāmba! I have thus told you this *kavaca*, which bestows auspiciousness in the three worlds and which is hard to be obtained in this world. I have manifested it to you because of my affection for you. || 15 ||

One who chants the sacred prayers of Śrī Sūrya without knowing this *kavaca* will not reach perfection even in hundreds of *crores* of days of Brahmā. || 16 ||

Thus ends the recitation of The Kavaca of Śrī Sūrya, known as Trailokya-Vijayam (Victory over the Three Worlds), as presented in the Brahma-Yāmala.

Śrī-Haridrā-Gaṇeśa-Kavacam

īśvara uvāca

śṛṇu vakṣyāmi kavacam sarva-siddhi-karam priye
pathitvā dhārayitvā ca naro mucyeta saṅkaṭāt || 1 ||

ajñātvā kavacam devi gaṇeśasya manum jayet
siddhir na jāyate tasya kalpa-koti-śatair api || 2 ||

om āmodaś ca śirah pātu pramodaś ca śikhopari
sammodo bhrū-yuge pātu bhrū-madhye ca gaṇādhipaḥ || 3 ||

gaṇa-kṛīḍo netra-yugmaṁ nāsāyām gaṇa-nāyakaḥ
gaṇa-kṛīḍānvitaḥ pātu vadane sarva-siddhaye || 4 ||

jihvāyām sumukhaḥ pātu grīvāyām durmukhaḥ sadā
vighneśo hṛdaye pātu vighna-nāśaś ca vakṣasi || 5 ||

gaṇānām nāyakaḥ pātu bāhu-yugme sadā mama
vighna-kartā ca udare vighna-hartā ca līṅgake || 6 ||

gaja-vaktraḥ kati-deśe eka-danto nitambake
lambodaraḥ sadā pātu guhya-deśe mamāruṇaḥ || 7 ||

vyāla-yajñopavīti mām pātu pāda-yuge tathā
jāpakaḥ sarvadā pātu jānu-jāṅghe gaṇādhipaḥ || 8 ||

hāridraḥ sarvadā pātu sarvāṅge gaṇa-nāyakaḥ
ya idaṁ prapaṭhen nityaṁ gaṇeśasya maheśvari || 9 ||

kavacam sarva-siddhākhyam sarva-vighna-vināśakam
sarva-siddhi-karam sāksāt sarva-pāpa-vimocanam
sarva-sampat-pradam sāksāt sarva-śatru-kṣayanakaram || 10 ||

graha-pīḍā jvaro rogo ye cānye guhyakādayaḥ
paṭhanāt śravaṇād eva nāsam āyānti tat-kṣaṇāt || 11 ||

dhana-dhānya-karam devi kavacam sura-pūjitam
samo nāsti maheśāni trailokya-gaṇam yasya ca || 12 ||

hāridrasya maheśāni kavacasya ca bhū-tale
kim anyair asad-ālāpāir yatrāyur vyayatām iyāt || 13 ||

The Kavaca of Śrī Haridrā Gaṇeśa²¹

The Lord said:

O beloved, listen to my description of the *kavaca* (protective shield) which gives all perfection, and reciting and wearing which one can become free from misery. || 1 ||

O goddess, those who chant the sacred prayers of Gaṇeśa without knowing this *kavaca* will not attain perfection even in hundreds of *crores* of days of Brahmā. || 2 ||

Om. May Āmoda (Who brings happiness) protect my head and Pramoda (Who gives pleasure) my *śikhā*. May Sammoda (Who gives joy) protect my eyebrows and Gaṇādhīpa (the Commander of troops of demigods) the place between them. || 3 ||

May Gaṇakrīḍa (Who plays with the demigods) protect my eyes and Gaṇanāyaka (the leader of the troops of demigods) my nose. May Gaṇakrīḍānvita (Who is engaged in play with the demigods) protect my face for achieving all perfection. || 4 ||

May Sumukha (the Bright-faced One) always protect my tongue and Durmukha (the Ugly-faced One) my neck. May Vighneśa (the Lord Who removes obstacles) protect my heart and Vighnanāśa (the Destroyer of obstacles) my chest. || 5 ||

May the leader of the demigods always protect my arms. May Vighnakartā (Who creates obstacles) protect my belly and Vighnahartā (Who destroys obstacles) my organ of generation. || 6 ||

²¹ Haridrā Gaṇeśa is a deity form of Śrī Gaṇeśa that is anointed with turmeric powder, or a form that has been carved out of a piece of turmeric. Turmeric is used in worship of several deities often by first coating Him with it and later bathing Him.

May Gajavaktra (Who has the head of an elephant) always protect my hips, Ekadanta (Who has one tusk) my buttocks, and Lambodara (Who has a large belly) of a golden complexion my private parts. || 7 ||

May Vyālayajñopavitī (Who wears a snake as his sacred thread) protect me as well as my legs. May the deity of Gaṇādhīpa (Ruler of the demigods) made of yellow fragrant wood always protect my knees and lower limbs. || 8 ||

May Gaṇanāyaka (Leader of the demigods) Who is yellow in complexion always protect my whole body.

O Maheśvarī, to him who regularly recites it aloud, this all-powerful and perfect *kavaca* of Gaṇeśa destroys all obstacles, bestows all perfections and indeed, liberates him from all sins. It awards all types of opulences and destroys all enemies.

The suffering caused by the positions of planets, by demons, fever, diseases as well as other problems with mysterious sources are immediately destroyed upon reciting and listening to this *kavaca*. || 9 - 11 ||

O Devī! This *kavaca* gives wealth and grains and is worshiped by gods. O Maheśānī! In all the three worlds together, nothing can equal this *kavaca* of Haridrā Gaṇeśa. Of what use then are other false recitations on this Earth, where one's life is limited and exhaustible? || 12 - 13 ||

Thus ends the recitation of Śrī-Haridrā-Gaṇeśa-Kavaca as given in the Viśva-Sāra-Tantra.

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Śrī Haridāsa Śāstrī describes here daily activities of a practitioner of *bhakti* while giving the needful qualifications, stressing adherence to *dharma* and drawing attention to the mood of surrender and service to one's beloved deity which nurtures affection for all living beings. At the same time, he points out that a self-centered consciousness and various other obstacles can hinder this path, and shows how these should be tackled. The book also contains sections on the praises of Tulasī, *prasādam* and prayers to Viṣṇu, Śiva, Durgā, Sūrya and Gaṇeśa.

